THE ORTHODOX WORD

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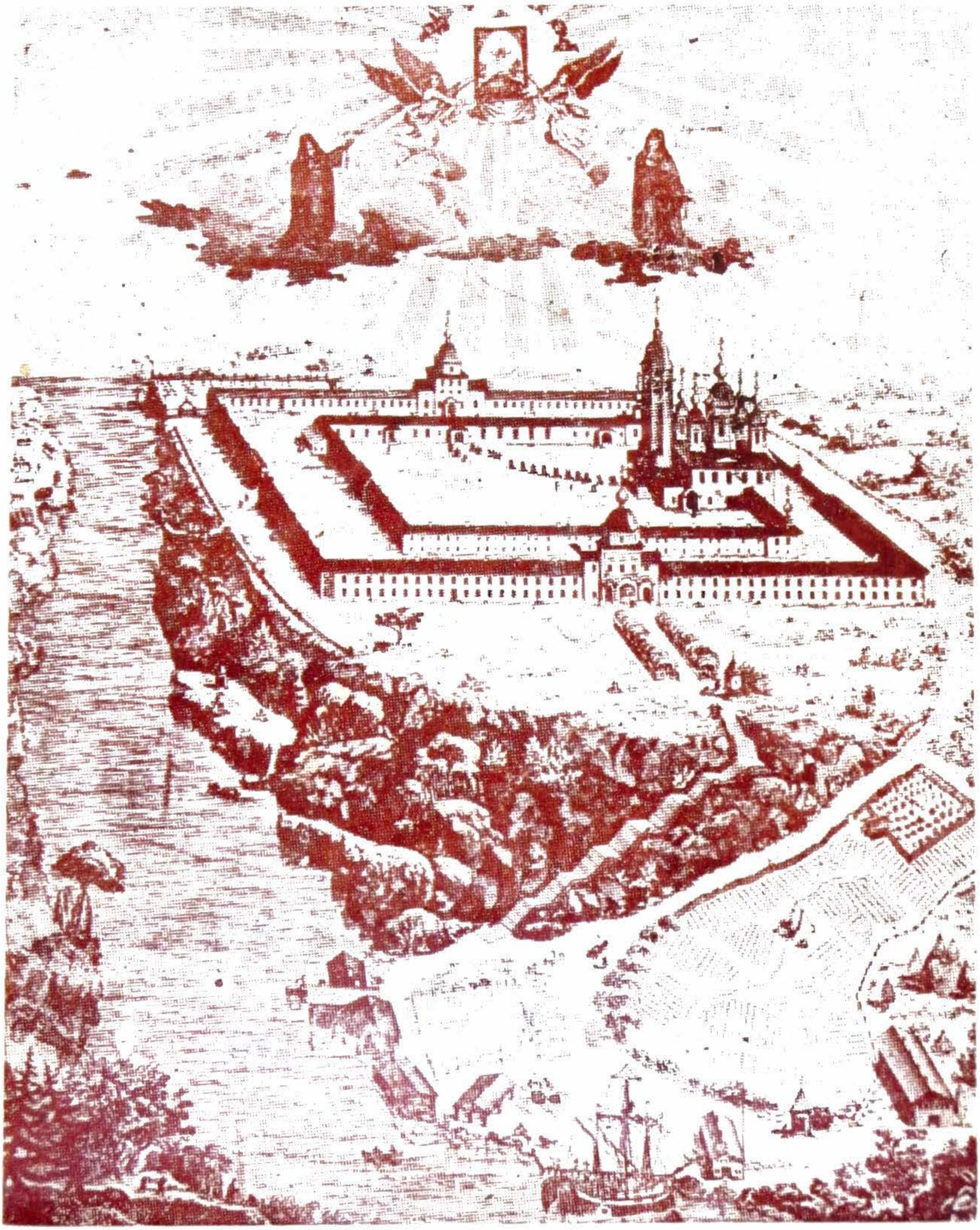

LETTERS

HELP THE ORTHODOX IN UGANDA!

I have the pleasure to have the opportunity of writing you informing you of our newly opened Orthodox Church of the Transfiguration of Namaliga. This is the church established in the area of Uganda worst stricken by the drought. Thousands and thousands of the young and old go nearly naked in my parish. I am looking after 2000 people, both old and young. They sleep in the church, on the verandah of the church and that of my house. I have given out all my clothing and I am left with church clothing only. The situation is quite appalling.

Please, dear brothers in Christ, contact for me any donors who are willing to help the needy, to come forward and assist these people. The average deaths per day here used to be 100 people, but now the situation has improved due to help from the French and other donor countries.

Being a new priest, I know very few of our brothers and sisters in Christ. I therefore please ask you kindly to contact these brothers and sisters the world over to assist these unfortunate people. Your immediate help will alleviate the situation.

I beg to remain yours in Christ,

Rev. Fr. Julius Wesongah and family
Orthodox Transfiguration Church
Box 75
Bombo, Uganda

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Let me first greet you in the name of God, the Holy Trinity, and in the Holy Spirit and in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

I am Ugandan by nationality and I believe in Orthodoxy. Thus I am Orthodox by religion. Dear brothers, I have written this letter with the aim of knowing how is Orthodox belief in outside countries. Through *The Orthodox Word* I understand that for you there the Christians are somehow all right.

Dear Christians, I have written this letter in the name of God requesting and asking and begging for any aid. I am a student at Bombo Senior Secondary School. I would request you brothers in the name of God to send to me a parcel of, for example, books concerning our religion, things which are used in school (simple ones, e.g., ball point pens, lead pencils. coloured pencils, books to write in), and if you manage you can send clothes, shoes, shirts, shorts, trousers, and many other necessary things, so that I and our poor Christians here may understand how merciful you Orthodox of the world are. You see, when the people saw that I am literate, they begged me to write you, so that we may be assisted by our brothers in Christ and through the belief of Orthodoxy.

I will be very glad if there is a

(*Continued on back cover*)

From this day, from this hour,
from this minute, let us strive
to love God above all,
and fulfill His holy will.

THE ORTHODOX WORD

For the Mission of True Orthodox Christianity

A Bimonthly Illustrated Periodical
of the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood
Established with the blessing of His Eminence
the late *John (Maximovitch)*, Archbishop of
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COVER: 18th-century engraving showing a general view of the monastery building newly erected by Elder Nazarius.

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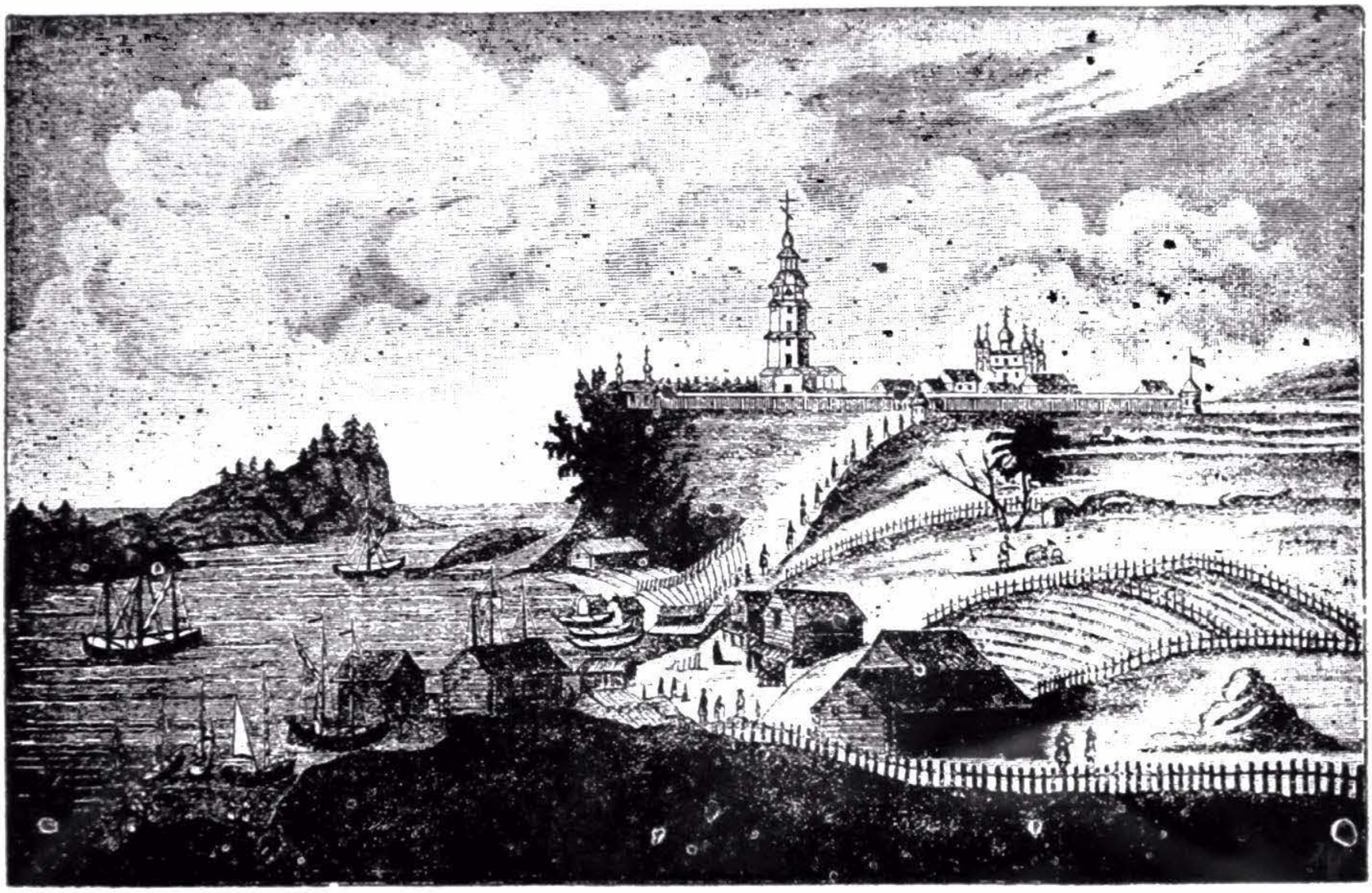

General views of Valaam in the late 18th century when its elders were working on the translation of the Philokalia

Little Russian Philokalia

Volume II

INTRODUCTION

The second volume of the *Little Russian Philokalia* is devoted chiefly to the writings of Elder Nazarius, a monk originally from Sarov, who renewed the oldest Russian monastery in the North, Valaam.

His teaching is clear, precise, and practical, gained not from book-learning but from personal experience; it is that of a true monk who knew the coenobitic monastic life from his early youth (he entered Sarov at 17), and a man of the deepest mystical life, who was in contact with Blessed Theodore of Sanaxar, St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky, Metropolitan Gabriel of Petersburg, and other holy monastic fathers of the 18th century. When undertaking the building of the large catholicon, one of his disciples, Innocent, his successor, saw angels together with Metropolitan Gabriel blessing the ediface (see chapter XVIII in *The Spiritual Treasury of St. Herman of Alaska*).

Like St. Anthony the Great, who could not write, Elder Nazarius dictated his instructions and letters to his disciple Hilarion, who later became known as one of the great elders of Sarov, and whom St. Seraphim called a saint, together with Nazarius. Elder Hilarion's own brief writings are also included in this volume.

Pursuing sobriety, Elder Nazarius was very conscious of self-deception, *prelest*. The famous Abbot of Pesnosha Monastery, Maximus, recalls how Nazarius, seeing in him an excessive desire to do the Jesus Prayer prematurely, told him of a young man who, not paying heed to the admonitions of his elder, continued to do the prayer according to his own will, until finally, one Sunday morning, he jumped from the belfry, imagining he had already achieved sanctity, and was killed.

The value of such a teacher in our days of spiritual poverty can hardly be overestimated.

THE LIFE OF OUR HOLY FATHER

NIPHON

BISHOP OF CYPRUS

Translated from the Russian Lives of Saints, based on the collection of St. Dimitry of Rostov, Moscow, Synodal Press, 1903.

1. His Corrupt Youth

SAINT NIPHON was from the land of Paphlagonia, the city of Plagion, in the northern part of Asia Minor, and was the son of a certain renowned person named Agapitus. As a child he was entrusted to the General Sabbatius, who had been sent from Constantinople to Paphlagonia by Constantine the Great. The General sent the boy with his keeper of the wardrobe to his wife in Constantinople to be educated. The boy began to study with the priest Peter, who lived in the house of the General, and he studied diligently and successfully, since he was good at learning. At this young age Niphon was good, quiet, meek, humble, and loved to go to church.

However, when he came to the age of youth. he began to be corrupted by bad companions, for youths, if they are not raised in the fear of God, easily give themselves over to bad examples. If among grown men a good person is easily corrupted by evil men, as it is written: *With the perverse thou shalt be perverse* (Ps. 17:27), then all the more often does this happen among young people, who are naturally more inclined to evil than to good, as it is written: *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth* (Gen. 8:21). Thus also the young Niphon began to lead an idle and lazy life, to eat too much, and drink; he learned from disorderly youths idle talking and foul language, began to go to the shows of clowns, and then to do unclean things. He would spend the whole night in lawless deeds, being defiled by unclean sins; and at the same time he began to steal, to quarrel and fight with everyone. He was a scandal for other young people, so that not only did he himself perform every lawless deed, but many others he inclined to do the same things.

SAINT NIPHON OF CYPRUS

Commemorated December 23

To few of the saints was the invisible world of spirits so opened as it was to this great struggler. The trials of St. Niphon, while greater than most Christians have to endure, are very realistic and in a particular sense can be understood by the Christians of this generation . In particular, the devil's temptation to declare "there is no God" is very close to some of the tortures administered to the inmates of concentration camps, prisons, and psychiatric hospitals in countries behind the Iron Curtain even today.

One friend of Niphon's, whose name was Basil, would constantly say to him: "Woe to you, Niphon! You are living in body, but are already dead in soul, and only your shadow is walking around among men."

Niphon would sometimes pay no attention to these words, but sometimes he would begin to weep and lament over his sins. However, continuing to follow his bad habits, he was drowning in his filthy deeds as in the sea, and despairing completely of his salvation, he would say: "I am already lost, and I cannot return to repentance; so at least I will enjoy here the pleasures of earth."

And the devil to such an extent made hard the heart of Niphon that he could not pray any more at all, for some kind of stone seemed always to lie on his heart. And the landlady with whom Niphon lived, seeing his corrupt life, with contrition of heart would say: "Woe is me, why has this misfortune come upon me?" Many times she would instruct Niphon, quarrel with him, scold him, and hit him; but he remained incorrigible.

These things have been related in order to show how great is God's mercy, by which he leads out what is honorable from what is unworthy, and from sinners makes righteous ones; and that there is no sin that exceeds God's love of mankind. Let this be for us sinners as an example, so that we might not despair, being immersed in many iniquities, but that we might be corrected by repentance like Niphon. For he was as it were a vessel of sin, but later, through true repentance, he became a vessel of the Holy Spirit, as we shall now find out from the following account.

2. He is Converted to a God-fearing Life.

Niphon had a friend whose name was Nicodemus. Once Niphon came to him; Nicodemus looked at him and was terrified, looking at his face with astonishment. Niphon asked him: "Why are you looking at me as if you don't even know me?" Nicodemus replied: "Believe me, brother, I have never seen you such as I see you now. Your face is frightful, like an Ethiopian's."

At these words the youth was afraid, but at the same time he became ashamed, and covering his face with his hands, he went away grieved. Along the way Niphon said to himself: "Woe to me, a sinner! If in this world I am black in soul and body, how shall I be at God's judgment? How will I appear before the face of God? Woe to me, miserable one! Where are you now, O my soul? Woe is me! What should I do? Can I still repent? Is there anyone who might instruct me in repentance and tell me whether I may yet be saved? How shall I say to God, Have mercy on me, when I

have performed before him so many vile deeds?"

And much besides this did Niphon say to himself. Finally he came home sad and tired. Two opposite thoughts were fighting in him. A good thought said to him: "Pray at night to God, and He will do with you as He wishes." But an evil thought opposed this, saying: "If you get up to pray, you will lose your mind, you will become a fool and everyone will begin to laugh at you."

The demon placed fear in his mind and mightily disturbed his soul. But after he had strengthened himself a little, he said to himself: "When I was living in fornication, no kind of evil happened to me. Can it really be that now, when I wish to pray to God, some kind of evil will occur to me? Be cursed, you unclean and sneaky demon who is instilling this in me!"

At night Niphon rose from his bed and began to weep and beat himself on the breast, saying: "How piously and virtuously I lived in earlier years, but now I am dead, being fiercely wounded by sins. But *O Lord my God, in Thee have I put my hope, save me, lest at any time like a lion* the devil *seize my soul, when there is none to redeem me* (Ps. 7:3).

As he stood at prayer and looked towards the east, suddenly a thick darkness enveloped him, approached him, and threw him into a state of weakness, affliction, and excessive fear. In terror Niphon lay on his bed, weeping and lamenting over his sins. In the morning he went to church; raising his eyes. he looked at the icon of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and with lamentation cried out: "Have mercy on me, Intercessor of Christians, O Pure One Who heard the greeting Rejoice! Help me according to Thy great mercy, for Thou art the hope and expectation of those who repent."

At these words of his, the image of the Mother of God smiled, and her face was joyful. Niphon was astonished, seeing this miracle; he was joyful and rejoiced in heart and said: "O the depths of God's love for mankind! How great is Thy mercy, O Lord, which Thou showest to those who have sinned before Thee! For them Thou hast given Thy Most Pure Mother, that she might be an intercessor before Thy greatness!"

After a long prayer, having kissed with love the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, he went out, saying to himself: "See, O wretched soul, how God loves us, but we ourselves flee from Him! He has given to us as an intercessor His Most Pure Mother, but we reject even this helper!"

After this, in a dream at night the devil appeared to him in the form of a certain boy who had been his companion in sins. He stood sadly, as if in great sorrow. Niphon looked at him and said: "Why are you so

sad?" The devil replied: "This is already the third day since you went to your friend Nicodemus and became corrupted. I am sorry over this and I cannot bear that you have come to despise me." Then Niphon said: "But why does this make you so sad?" The devil turned away and did not give him any answer. Then Niphon awoke. He understood that the devil was sorry over his repentance. Quickly he arose, went to church, and directing his eyes and mind to that icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, he prayed until he again saw her smiling, and he felt a divine sweetness in his heart.

3. His First Trials

One day, going to church to pray, Niphon saw a certain man who was acting in a disorderly manner on the street, and in his mind he judged him. Coming to the temple of God and looking at the icon as was his custom, he suddenly saw the Most Pure Mother of God with an angry and strict face turning away from him. Niphon was terrified and, directing his glance downward, said to himself: "Woe to me a sinner! I had only one joy—thy most holy image, O Sovereign Lady, but now it turns away its face, and I do not know why!" Then, reflecting in himself, he suddenly remembered how he had judged the sinner, and he understood that it was for this that the Mother of the Lord had turned her face away from him. Loudly lamenting, he said: "O God, forgive me a sinner; for I have taken upon myself Thy dignity and Thine authority and have judged my neighbor before Thy judgment. But have mercy on me, O Master, for my soul hopes in Thee. From this time forth, I will never judge my brother."

Then Niphon said yet much more with tears, and looking again at the icon, he saw that it was smiling as before; and from that time he began to keep himself most carefully from judging others. Thus it always happened that when he sinned in anything, the image of the Most Pure Mother of God turned away her face, and by this Niphon was instructed and corrected.

Once, when Niphon was dipping up water from a well with a bucket, the devil pushed him, and slipping with both feet, he fell into the well. In falling down he seized the bucket and cried out: "O Lady, help me!" And immediately he was standing unharmed on the beam over the well. From this time on, having understood that the Mother of God was preserving him, Niphon began always to have her name on his lips.

After this, it happened that he was ill—from the feast of the Resurrection of Christ to the feast of Mid-Pentecost—and in this illness he could say nothing else but: "Glory be to my God, glory be to my helper, the Most Pure Virgin Mary." On the Monday before the Wednesday of Mid-Pentecost he prayed thus: "O Lord my God, vouchsafe me to receive communion of

Thy Holy Mysteries on the day of Mid-Pentecost, for my soul greatly desires to eat of Thy Flesh."

Then he fell asleep, and he had the following vision: Two most bright women walked past his bed like myrrh-bearing women—one, in royal purple, held an olive branch, and the other, similar to her, walked after her and carried a small vessel with a certain holy thing and a branch moistened in holy oil. Going up to the bed, they stopped. And the woman in royal purple said to the other: "See, Anastasia, what this youth is suffering from." And Anastasia* replied to her: "My lady, he is suffering from his unrestrained tongue, because when he was well his mouth was never closed, and now the Lord is chastising him so that he might not be condemned there with the whole world; for God loves him very much and is chastising him. But thou, O my Lady, if you wish, have mercy on him and help him."

The woman in royal purple answered: "I shall have mercy; only conduct him there where we are going."

Anastasia took him by the hand and conducted him into the church of the Holy Apostles. Then the woman in royal purple said to her: "Take oil from the lamp which burns in the altar and anoint him from head to foot." She anointed him and said: "Behold, O Lady, I have fulfilled your order." The woman in royal purple smiled and said: "This is a sign of mercy, and it is for this that we have come."

And she gave Niphon the olive branch which she held in her hand, with the following words: "Behold and understand that this branch is from the grace of the Lord, and I give it to you because now the mercy of the most compassionate God has been poured out upon you. But do you now fight with the demons, and you will conquer them just as easily as if they were a weed or dry grass."

Niphon bowed down to her feet and, awakening, understood that this vision indicated the blessing of the Most Pure Mother of God. He immediately became well and rose from his bed. On Tuesday he strengthened himself with food, and on the very day of Mid-Pentecost he came to church and with great joy received communion of the Divine Mysteries. Thus, with the help of God, blessed Niphon left off his former sinful life, went away from the world, and became a monk.

He began to struggle fervently and to labor mightily, mortifying his body and subjecting it to the spirit, spending his days in tears and in strict repentance. He carefully kept his lips from idle words, and all the

* This was St. Anastasia the deliverer from bonds, who is commemorated by the Church on December 22.

more from filthy words and slander, and made it his rule to beat himself hard forty times on the face if any time, out of lack of caution, he should pronounce any indecent or offensive word. Sometimes, however, he would place a stone in his mouth and carry it about for a long time, saying to himself: "It is better for you, O lawless one, to eat stones than to speak any kind of evil words."

4. *His Four Years of Testing.*

Often, having shut himself in his hut and undressed, he would beat himself with something over his whole body so powerfully that sometimes from the wounds pieces of flesh would fall off. So stubbornly did he fight with the invisible enemy that the latter conducted against him a powerful warfare, causing him every kind of evil and desiring to conquer his unconquerable courage. At the time of prayer the demon appeared to him sometimes in the form of a bird hopping about in front of him, and sometimes in the form of a black dog which threw itself upon him so as to frighten him and interrupt his prayer. But he chased away the demon by the sign of the cross. When he felt hunger, the demon would offer him various kinds of fish and meat and delicious dishes. But the blessed one would say: "Food does not draw us near to God—you eat your own food yourself, devil, or else take it wherever people make their belly their god."

When the Saint would keep vigil, the devil would bring upon him drowsiness and a mighty sleep; but the blessed one, feeling this, would take a stick and beat himself painfully, saying: "I gave you to eat and drink, and now you want to sleep as well. I will give you rest with a stick."

If Niphon felt at any time the desire of the flesh, for a whole week he would not take bread into his mouth, but would torture himself with hunger and thirst, until he mortified in himself the desire of the flesh. When he was very thirsty, he would pour water for himself, place it in front of him, and looking at it would say: "How delicious this water is." And then, taking a little water in his mouth, he would test it with his tongue and then pour it out on the ground. The demon could not endure such patience of the blessed one, and he loudly cried out: "You have conquered me, O Niphon!" But Saint Niphon, ascribing the victory over the demons to the power and help of God and not to his own struggles and restraint, replied to him: "It is not I who conquer you, but the power of our God, Who preserves His slaves."

God allowed a special temptation to come upon Niphon so that, being tried like gold in the furnace, he might turn out to be worthy of the

grace of the Lord. Accordingly, the blessed one went out of his mind at the instigation of the devil, and this continued for four years. Once Niphon was standing at prayer from evening until morning, and suddenly he heard a frightful noise going from right to left. The saint became terrified and wondered what kind of noise this might be; and immediately the devil appeared with a great roar and rage and caused such terror in the saint that his mind was darkened. Scarcely coming to himself, he wished to pray and sign himself with the sign of the cross, but the devil fell upon him and said: "Leave off prayer, and I will cease fighting with you!" The blessed one, however, replied: "I will not obey you for anything, unclean spirit; if God has commanded you to destroy me, I will accept this with gratitude; but if not, then soon with the help of God I will conquer you!"

The devil said to this: "You are in error, Niphon. There is no God—for where is He?" Thus the demon constantly spoke to him, corrupting and darkening his mind. The saint, however, replied to him: "You speak, O devil, as a fool; for *The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God* (Ps. 13:1).

He wished to pray, but he could not. He would produce the words, but his mind did not obey him. The saint became greatly saddened, being muddled in mind; and from this time he lost his mind and suffered. And when he came a little to himself, again the demon, without ceasing, would say to him: "There is no God!" But the saint replied: "Even if I fall into fornication, or if I commit murder, or perform any other sin, I will not renounce my Christ."

But the devil again said to him: "What are you saying? *Is* there a Christ? There is no Christ, but I alone have authority over everything and reign over all. Who told you that there is a God or a Christ?"

"You will not deceive me, dark power!" replied the saint; "depart from me, enemy of all righteousness!"

The devil, however, did not go away, but continued to fight with him, darkening his mind and trying to force him to say: "There is no God." Thus for four years the Saint fought with the demon and forced himself to pray. Once, during the time of prayer, coming to doubt whether there is a God, he looked at the icon of the Saviour, and sighing from the depths of his heart, he stretched out his hands to the icon with the words: *"O God, my God, Why hast Thou forsaken me?* (Ps. 21:1). Grant me to know that Thou art God, and that there is no other than Thee, so that I may not bow down to the counsel of the enemy."

With these words he saw that the face of Christ on the icon was shining like the sun, and at the same time he smelled an unutterable fragrance. In terror he fell down to the ground, saying: "Forgive me, O Master, that I have tempted Thee, doubting Thee, my God; now I believe that Thou art the only God and Creator of all creatures."

Lying on the ground, he turned his head, looked at the image of the Saviour, and he saw a miracle: the image of the Lord moved its eyes and brows like a living man. Niphon cried out: "Blessed is my God, and blessed is His glorious name, now and unto the ages, amen!" From that time on the grace of God descended upon Niphon, because the four years of his testing had passed.

5. His Spiritual Eyes are Opened.

After this Niphon's face was always joyful and bright, so that some people were perplexed and said: "What does this mean? For many years he was walking around gloomy, and now he is joyful and rejoicing." The saint had acquired courage against the demons; laughing at them, he said: "Where are those who say there is no God?" And he conquered them by constant prayer. Reflecting on his previous sins, he said to himself: "Let us go to church, sinful Niphon; let us confess our sins to the Lord. There a bountiful Father awaits us."

And he went to church. Going up to the church door, Niphon raised his hands with bitter lamentation and cried out: "Receive me who am dead in soul and mind, O Lord Jesus Christ my God, receive me, a foul-mouthed sinner who am defiled in soul and body, and do not turn away Thy face. Do not say, O Master: 'I know not who you are,' but heed the voice of my entreaty and save me. For Thou dost not wish the death of sinners, and I will not depart from Thee until Thou hearest me and grantest the forgiveness of my transgressions!"

During this prayer there was suddenly heard a loud noise from heaven, and the saint in ecstasy saw the face of a bright man which appeared in a cloud; and hands were seen stretched out, by which He embraced the blessed one as once the father had embraced the prodigal son; and He kissed him on the neck, saying: "You have done well that you came here, O my grieving child! I have been very sad and afflicted over you; how My heart grieved with waiting when you would return to Me, whether in the evening or the morning. And now I rejoice, now I am glad, seeing that you have been converted to me with all your heart."

This Saint Niphon later related to his disciple, and while doing so

greatly wept. After this, when he was again praying, an angel of God appeared with a cup full of myrrh, which he poured out over his head; and that place was filled with fragrance. Likewise when he was beating himself on the body, causing wounds to himself, an angel descended and censed around him, spreading fragrance about that place.

So much did the spiritual eyes of blessed Niphon become enlightened that he knew the secrets of human hearts; he conversed with angels openly as with friends, and saw demons clearly. Once, on the way from the church of St. Anastasia to his own hut, at the gate of the house of a certain harlot he saw an angel in the form of a youth who was bitterly weeping, and he asked him the reason for his tears. The angel replied: "I have been given by God for the safekeeping of a certain man who is now sleeping in this house with a harlot, and by this cruelly offends me; I cannot look at the iniquity which he is performing. How can I not weep when I see into what darkness the image of God has been submerged?"

The blessed one said to him: "Why do you not chastise him, so that he might step away from sin?" "It is not possible for me," the angel answered, "to come near him, since from the time that he began to sin, he has been the slave of the demons, and I do not have any power over him. For God made man with free will and pointed out to him the narrow path and the broad path, so that he might go on whichever one he wishes."

Then Saint Niphon said to his disciple: "There is no sin more vile than the sin of fornication. However, if one who has fallen into this sin repents, God receives him more quickly than other sinners, because this sin comes from nature itself, at the instigation of the devil, and this passion is banished by fervent prayer, strict fasting and various mortifications of the body."

The Saint was able to see how the demons would go about among the people and tempt them, inspiring in them judgment, slander, quarrels, and various sorrows. Once he saw a certain man at work, and there came to him a demon who began to whisper into his ear. Not far away another man was working; the demon came and also whispered into his ear. Then, leaving off their work, they began to quarrel. The blessed one, standing up, said: "O temptation of the demons! How you sow hostility among men!"

Once the demon of vainglory fell upon him and said: "Now you will begin to perform signs and your name will be glorified in all the earth, for you have pleased God." But the blessed one said to that demon: "Wait, and I will perform a sign for you." Finding a stone in front of him, he said: "Now I say to you, stone: go away from here and remove to a different

place." But the stone lay unmoving. Then the Saint said to the demon: "Here is your gift, O devil!" And he spit in his face. Then he prayed, and the devil instantly disappeared.

Another time Niphon saw a certain clergyman behind whom a demon was walking, instilling in him filthy and blasphemous thoughts. This man, feeling in himself the snares of the devil, often turned around and spit at the demon. The blessed one said to the evil demon: "Leave off disturbing the servants of God, O devil! What profit is it to you if this soul will go into perdition?" The demon replied: "There is no profit for us in this, but we have an order from our king and our princes who reign over us, to fight against men. If the princes find out that we are not fighting with men, they will beat us cruelly."

Yet another time the blessed one saw a certain monk who was walking and whispering a prayer, and from his mouth there flew out a fiery flame that reached to heaven. With him was his angel with a fiery spear in his hand, with which he was chasing away the demons from that monk.

On the eve of the feast if the Resurrection of Christ, in the evening of Great Saturday, Niphon was standing in church with the people and saw the Most Holy Mother of God with the Apostles and a multitude of saints; she had entered the church and with motherly love looked at the people who were present. If she saw any of them being concerned over his salvation. she greatly rejoiced; but looking at the careless ones, she shook her head and wept. However, stretching out her arms, she prayed to God for everyone, that all might receive salvation. Seeing this, the saint unutterably rejoiced that the Most Pure Mother of God did not abandon Christians, but was constantly helping them; and to him also she was a special helper and defender.

Once, when Niphon was sleeping, suddenly the devil appeared with a weapon in his hand and threw himself upon him with the intention of killing him; but being stopped by the power of God, he could not do anything evil to the Saint, and he fled, gnashing his teeth and saying: "O Mary, you always chase me away from this man who is so cruel to me!"

6. *His Gift of Consoling and Healing.*

The Saint had the gift of instructing and consoling the sorrowing by his words. A certain brother came to the saint in sorrow and asked: "What shall I do, father? The evil demons are cruelly disturbing me; whether I am eating or drinking or standing at prayer, they instill in my heart either

(*Continued on page 139*)

OFFICIAL STATEMENTS OF THE SOBOR OF BISHOPS OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA (1976)

The Church in Russia

Translated from the Epistles of this Sobor (Council), especially the one "To the Russian People in the Homeland." (Titles added by translators; for a fuller translation, see The Orthodox Word, 1976, no. 5, pp. 160-166.)

Our Russian Church Outside of Russia, as is well known, is a part of the Russian Mother Church, its free part. Although we, in accordance with the testament of the ever-memorable, Most Blessed Metropolitan Anastassy, have no communion with the Soviet Patriarchate, we have never broken off with the Russian Church, our Mother Church. Therefore, the needs of the Russian Church are our needs, and the needs of our brethren who live under the heavy yoke of the God-hating regime are our needs. The believing people in our Homeland now are in extreme need of spiritual food, religious, moral and instructive literature, and it is our duty to help them in this.

Despite the efforts of militant atheism and the favorable conditions for them in the world, we know that Christ is unconquerable. Being persecuted, He cannot be uprooted from the hearts of men . . . This is why we wish to say to you:

TO THE CATACOMB CHURCH

Rejoice and be glad, new unconquerable martyrs of Russia, Metropolitans Peter, Cyril, Joseph and the millions martyred with you who now stand at the Throne of the Lord of Glory and pray for us! Be glad and rejoice, you who are alive now, invincible confessors of the Faith of Christ! We reverently bow down before your exploit and say to you as younger brothers: You are the light of the contemporary world which has gone astray in lies and sin; you are the salt of the earth; you are those "ten righteous ones" for whose sake the Lord endures our sins; you are the conquerors of him who brazenly thinks that all the kingdoms of the world and their glory

are his, but he cannot conquer you! You are his ruin, but our hope, our glory, our victory!

We are in awe before your exploit, pastors of the contemporary Russian catacombs, pastors who have not sought legalization, who perform your service secretly from the prince of this world, with the blessing of your courageous hierarchs! You, O fathers and teachers, serve for us as a living example of uncompromisingness and courage! May God be your help!

TO PRIESTS OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

We kiss the Cross which you also have taken upon yourself, O pastors who have found the courage and the power of spirit to be open accusers of the faintheartedness of your hierarchs who have capitulated to the atheists, to be fearless gatherers and instructors of those who seek spiritual food—first of all, young people. We know of your exploit, we read about you, we read what you have written, we pray for you and ask your prayers for our flock in the Diaspora. Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!

THE ORTHODOX REVIVAL IN RUSSIA

The life of the Church continues even under the pressure of atheism, often taking, thanks to the pressure and violence, forms unusual in peaceful circumstances, breaking out through the bonds and chains into the freedom of spirit and the victory of the children of God!

With love we follow this process in our Homeland and rejoice over it. We know how difficult it is, especially for young people, to find Christ after the atheist upbringing they have received in school. This is why they often waver between Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and the sects. But Prince Vladimir, who renounced paganism at the end of the tenth century, did not waver. He became Orthodox, finding in Orthodoxy the true Faith, and he placed Russia upon the historical Orthodox path. We believe that if you will seek the truth freely, sincerely and honestly, you will go on his path.

We know that among you some are attracted by so-called "ecumenism." We fully understand that the rightless and persecuted want to feel the support of a neighbor, of someone who is also a believer, even though in some other way. Against this one cannot object . . . But even under the best of mutual relations, there is still a boundary which an Orthodox Christian cannot cross, where the "holy of holies" of the true Faith begins.

In Defense of Father Dimitry Dudko

He that hath an ear, let him hear
what the Spirit saith unto the churches.
Apoc. 2:7

MANY ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS in the free world were saddened to hear of Father Dimitry Dudko's "confession" on Soviet television (June 20, 1980), when he read a prepared statement renouncing all his articles and books and acknowledging himself guilty of "anti-Soviet activity." This occurred after Fr. Dimitry had been imprisoned for five months and had been allowed to see no one, not even members of his own family.

One can only guess at the pressures and psychological weapons (including injection of mind-weakening drugs) that caused Fr. Dimitry to read this statement, which was evidently composed for him by the KGB. Perhaps he was actually "broken" by the pressures—broken not in his Christian faith, which he did not renounce, but in his sense of mission to preach the Gospel so boldly in the midst of the impossible conditions of Soviet Russia—but until such time as he becomes free to speak openly (which may never occur) it is hardly possible to say just what happened to him. According to the latest information about him, he has been set "free" awaiting his trial, but has been sent outside Moscow and is allowed contact with no one.

A few people in the free world took advantage of this sad incident to proclaim in effect "I told you so!"—as though this "confession" proves that Fr. Dimitry was not genuine in the first place, or that he himself and his message are now thoroughly discredited. Some have quoted obviously slanted accounts that state that Fr. Dimitry was "calm and cheery" and was "smiling" during his "confession," contradicting other accounts that say he was clearly "nervous" and "ill at ease." This response was obviously what the Communist authorities had in mind when they arranged this show

"confession"; their clear intent in staging it was to cut off the "religious revival" in Russia and stop the support in the West for such leaders of it as Fr. Dimitry.

But even before this, there were a number of attacks made against Fr. Dimitry in the free Western press, both Russian and non-Russian, and these attacks continue up to the present. In general these attacks, which have caused disturbance and confusion among some Orthodox Christians, are characterized by a lack of understanding and sympathy for the situation of the suffering Orthodox Christians in the Soviet Union, as well as by certain preconceived ideas about Orthodoxy there. The present article will examine some of the main accusations made against Fr. Dimitry and attempt to answer them by giving a more thorough picture of Fr. Dimitry's actual views and the real situation of Orthodox Christians in the Soviet Union today. In the course of this examination we will try to evaluate Fr. Dimitry's message for contemporary Orthodoxy and suggest what our attitude in the free West should be towards him and other representatives of the Orthodox revival in the Soviet Union.

1. IS FATHER DIMITRY A "RUSSIAN CHAUVINIST"?

Some of the attacks in the West have accused Fr. Dimitry of being a "Russian chauvinist" who places Russia before Orthodoxy, as well as of being "messianic" and "apocalyptic," of placing too much emphasis on a "world crisis" of faith, and of seeing Russia as the very center of this crisis, the religious "resurrection" of Russia having a message for the whole world. For some Russian liberals in the West (many of whom have now rejected Fr. Dimitry) the "last straw" in this respect was his several letters in defense of the martyred Tsar Nicholas II and appealing for his canonization, together with his statement that he already prayed to the "Great-martyr Nicholas" as a saint (*Orthodox Life,* 1978, no. 5, p. 47). Thus, despite Fr. Dimitry's clear statements that he venerates the Tsar for religious and not political reasons, some people condemn him also as a "tsarist" and even a "fascist."

These are all precisely some of the chief accusations made against the Catacomb Church of Russia, and this shows (among other things to be noted below) how close in spirit Fr. Dimitry is to the Catacomb Church. What is regarded by unsympathetic outsiders as "chauvinism," "tsarism," and "crisis mentality" is, on a closer and more sympathetic examination, seen to be a profoundly "suffering Orthodoxy" (to use the phrase of St. Gregory the Theologian) which goes deeper than the comfortable, academic Orthodoxy

that is so easy to hold in the free West; it is simply Orthodoxy in action, filled with love for the suffering brother in front of one. In his "letter from exile" (*The Orthodox Word,* no. 89) Fr. Dimitry well says: "If I will simply speak of Orthodoxy and not see suffering Russia, Orthodoxy for me could be something of the head." No one who has read his writings carefully can seriously doubt that, for all his love for Russia and the Tsar, it is always and only *Orthodoxy* to which he is inviting and converting people. As he himself says: "Both a 'Russian priest' and the 'Russian Church' are partial phenomena which must enter into the whole. But before me always and first of all is the *Church*. It is to the *Church* that I strive to bring people" (*Vestnik* of the Western European Diocese of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, 1980, no. 16, p. 17).

This is not "chauvinism"—it is simply heartfelt Orthodoxy, a kind we ourselves need much more of in the West. And if we in the West are not aware of the literally "apocalyptic" crisis of which Fr. Dimitry speaks, and which is felt most acutely in the suffering Russan land (even as many of the listeners of St. John of Kronstadt thought that he also was "exaggerating" about the spiritual crisis of his times), then it is surely time we woke up from our spiritual sleep and began to see it. Finally, if some in the West do not understand what the "resurrection" of Russia might mean, let them at least, in Christian charity, not disparage this hope of a suffering people that is literally going through Golgotha now.

2. IS FATHER DIMITRY AN "ENEMY OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH"?

Some people have accused Fr. Dimitry of being an enemy of the Catacomb Church of Russia and state that he is virtually a "heretic" because he does not "join the Catacomb Church" but on the contrary stays with the Moscow Patriarchate and says that "one is forced to remain with the hierarchy that has been given us." This kind of critic can see only "either/or": if the Catacomb Church exists in Russia, one *must* join it or be outside the Church. When Fr. Dimitry states that the Catacomb Church is very small, has very few priests, and is not accessible to the people, such critics think that Fr. Dimitry is only trying to disparage the Catacomb Church and justify his own position as a priest of the Moscow Patriarchate.

This criticism comes, quite simply, from ignorance; no one with a realistic awareness of the actual religious situation in Russia today could say such things. Fr. Dimitry's description of the Catacomb Church coincides exactly with the description of it we have from actual members of that Church: it is indeed small, with very few clergy, and it is virtually inaccessible to

all but a small number of people; being illegal, it does not make itself known to outsiders but hides from everyone; it is virtually impossible for an outsider to find any clergy from this Church, and out of the question for someone like Fr. Dimitry, who is well-known and under constant watch by the KGB. The most optimistic and sympathetic guess as to the number of Catacomb priests does not exceed 200 for the whole of Russia (less than one to every million inhabitants!)*, and we find out about these courageous strugglers *only* if the Soviet police uncover them and bring them to trial.

What would be involved for Fr. Dimitry to "join the Catacomb Church"? Even if he could find it (that is, let us say, find an actual Catacomb priest and attend his services), this is not yet the same as "joining" it. In the free West, when a priest wishes for conscience' sake to change from one Orthodox jurisdiction to another (let us say, from the ecumenistic Greek Archdiocese to the Russian Church Outside of Russia), how thoroughly he investigates the whole situation: talks to priests and bishops, attends services, examines exact doctrinal positions, clears up all manner of rumors and tales; and even then he often hesitates for fear of the difficulties that might arise in an organization and with people so new to him.

How much more complex is this whole process in the Soviet Union, where only one Orthodox jurisdiction is allowed to exist, where the Catacomb Church is fiercely persecuted and reliable information about it is extremely difficult to come by. At the present time Fr. Dimitry's knowledge of it (on the clergy level) can be little more than hearsay, based on contacts with a few lay members; and does one join a new jurisdiction on the basis of hearsay? Even if he could meet a priest, could he ever go so far as to meet a bishop? If not, he could hardly be received into the Catacomb Church. But how could he know that the person he might be introduced to as a "catacomb bishop" is actually an Orthodox bishop instead of a sectarian imposter, or even a KGB agent? And what Catacomb bishop will sacrifice his anonymity to meet with Fr. Dimitry, who after all might himself be a KGB agent (for such is the air of suspicion in Soviet Russia that literally no stranger can be trusted)? What of the conflicting rumors that there is not one but *several* groups of Catacomb Christians who call themselves "Orthodox"—the "True Orthodox Church," "True Orthodox Christians," "True Orthodox Christian Wanderers,' etc.? What if one joins an "Orthodox" sect instead of the actual Catacomb Orthodox Church? Critics in the West would surely accuse Fr. Dimitry of being a "heretic" and "outside the Church" if he did that!

* Religion and Atheism in the USSR, December, 1974, p. 2.

The real problems involved (and we have given only a few here) in finding and joining the Catacomb Church in Russia are not at all as simple as they seem to someone enjoying the freedom and leisure of the West, where one need only look in a clergy listing or even a telephone book to find official representatives of whichever Orthodox jurisdiction one might choose.

But even supposing Fr. Dimitry could *join* the true Catacomb Church of Russia, his first public confession of this fact would be the sign for the end of his church activity; he would be arrested instantly for belonging to this illegal organization. In such circumstances his only purpose in announcing this change would be in order to confess the truth; but why should he do this if this is not at all what the Catacomb Church itself is doing in Russia today? Catacomb clergy do *not* confess this fact but remain in hiding until they are caught by the police. We in the free West have little enough right to judge someone *there,* in enslaved Russia, for failing to be an open confessor; but if we insist on judging Fr. Dimitry for this, then we surely should condemn the whole Catacomb Church for the same thing.

No one aware of church life in Russia could possibly condemn Fr. Dimitry for not "joining the Catacomb Church"; if he did, it would be a miracle—but it is not something we could *expect* or *demand* of him.

In actual fact, Fr. Dimitry's activity in the past several years has been very much in the spirit of the Catacomb Church in its early years. We have already mentioned his "suffering Orthodoxy," his apocalyptic awareness, and his veneration of the Tsar-martyr Nicholas II; further, his bold accusations against the betrayal of Orthodoxy by his own bishops have not been heard in Russia since the days of Metropolitan Joseph and other founders of the Catacomb Church in the late 1920's; and the fervor of his heartfelt Orthodoxy is so far from the dreary legalism of the Moscow Patriarchate that it can only be compared with that of the early martyrs of the Catacomb Church in Russia.

Let us see now what Fr. Dimitry himself has said about the Catacomb Church in Russia, about his own attitude to the "Sergianism" of the Moscow Patriarchate, and about his view of the church situation in general in Russia.

"We all recognize Patriarch Tikhon, and we look on Patriarch Sergius as a betrayal of the Church's interests to please the authorities. The following (Patriarchs)—Alexy and the present Pimen—only go on the road already opened. We have no other hierarchy. The Catacomb Church would be good—but where is it? The True Orthodox Church—these are good people, morally steadfast; but they have almost no priesthood, and you simply can't find them, while there are many who are thirsting. And one has to be ministered to by the hierarchy we do have. Immediately the question arises: *are* they

ministering to us? Basically, they are the puppets of the atheists. And another question: at least, are they believers? Who will answer this question? I fear to answer . . .

"One should say a few words about the so-called Tikhonites, the True Orthodox Christians. I have met them, rejoiced at their moral steadfastness, rejoiced even at their conservatism, rejoiced at their courage and asceticism; but I've taken a look at them, and they have no unanimity. And the chief thing about them: they have almost no priesthood, the leadership has been taken over by women dressed in black like nuns, who consider everyone to be heretics and only themselves infallible. They should be put in a museum—and I speak without irony—in a museum where people could look at them and even learn something; but after all, life is not a museum. Some of the "Tikhonites" have begun to preach celibacy for everyone, but can everyone take this?

"Many of them suffer for years without communion. One such person came to me; I spoke with him, and he received communion. And you should have seen how he instantly came to life!

"And so, whether we wish or not, we must take into consideration the hierarchy which we have. What should we do?

"I think that, being together with everyone, we should strive to revive church life. But how? This question is like a nail driven into our brains. O Lord, have You really abandoned us?

"It is easy to observe from outside, but how difficult it is to do something—it is unbearable, impossible. But one *must* do something.

"The question stands thus: either live or perish.

"To perish is not the same thing as deciding the question abstractly. And you who try to draw a conclusion from the whole matter—do not take just one tendency for an example. I think that everyone now wants to find a way out; we're sick and tired of atheism, it has become repugnant even to the atheists.

"If possible, carefully support us—here I appeal to the West. Try not to remake us to somehow fit your own situation. The Russians have their own path. You can lure them into another one, but you will see that you will get no good from it.

"Each one goes on his own path. We are going on the path of Golgotha, a difficult one; such is God's will. If you support our cross—thank you. We need nothing more than this; we must find the way out ourselves. If we do this, perhaps we will have something new to say to you also (*Possev*, July, 1979, pp. 37-38).

No open-minded Orthodox Christian in the West can read such a statement—which comes from a deeply suffering Orthodox heart—without feeling great sympathy for Fr. Dimitry and all like him who are trying to find their way out of the literally unparalleled and impossible situation in which they find themselves within the Moscow Patriarchate and in an atheist society. One cannot quote canons to a drowning person; we cannot turn away from such people and tell them to "join the Catacomb Church" before we will offer them our support.

The agony of suffering Orthodoxy in our days cannot always be solved by a change of jurisdictions. Even in the free West the jurisdictional situation is immensely complicated. Some of those who see things in terms of "either/or" think that all new-calendarist Greeks, for example, should simply "join the old calendarists." But many new-calendarist Greeks have

found the situation of the old calendarists in Greece—with their innumerable "jurisdictions" and sometimes extreme and ignorant views—to be exactly the same situation that Fr. Dimitry finds in the Catacomb Church in Russia, and they have rejected this "logical conclusion" ("logical" to outsiders who don't have to face the actual choices involved) in order to join the Synod of the Russian Church Outside of Russia. But this also is an irregular and abnormal solution which produces its own conflicts and problems, and no one has a right to demand of anyone else that they "join the Synod" as the answer to the ever more open apostasy of the new calendarist Greek bishops. If someone can do this, and find his place in this jurisdiction without falling into the pitfall of criticizing his bishops and spreading the atmosphere of suspicion that prevails among Greek old calendarists, and thus coming into conflict with the clergy and believers of the Synod, well and good; but no one can *demand* this of anyone.

The situation of Fr. Dimitry in many respects is identical with that of those new-calendarist Greek priests who are aware of the false path of their own bishops but are unable to "join the old calendarists" because of the confusion and extremism to be found in their ranks (not, of course, among *all* old calendarists, but in enough of them to make the situation very confusing and difficult). Fr. Dimitry does not have the third alternative of "joining the Synod"—although it is quite clear from his own statements that this is precisely what he would do if the choice were his (that is, if he were to be exiled to the West). Here, for example, are some of his words about the Russian Church Outside of Russia in one of his last tape-recorded talks before his arrest (Grebnevo, November, 1979):

> "They have to preserve Tradition in the West. This is better and more convenient for them. Let it be that it is the 'old women' there, but they also can do much. We know *who* is pained over Russia, for whom Russia is dear, even if there may be among them some extreme views . . .
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> "I will say that I am very thankful to the Synodal Church Outside of Russia, because it is most of all people from there that, when they come here, I feel they are 'mine'; it is so pleasant to speak with them . . . Perhaps not everyone in the Church Outside of Russia understands me, but for the most part they do understand. And I'm not offended! When people from the autocephalous American Church came, there were good talks; but I feel that they have a somewhat Western outlook . . .
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> "They tell me that I am of a Slavophile tendency. I acknowledge, of course, that I am really a Russian, a priest, and that I have a Russian attitude, without being separate from the Fullness of the Church. Both a 'Russian priest' and the 'Russian Church' are partial phenomena which must enter into the whole. But before me always and first of all is the *Church*. It is to the *Church* that I strive to bring people" (*Vestnik* of the Western European Diocese of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, 1980, no. 16, p. 17).

In the Soviet Union, as nowhere else in the world, it is impossible to apply strict "jurisdictional" labels. In the Moscow Patriarchate there have been betrayer bishops, and the very principle of "Sergianism" is a betrayal of Orthodoxy, as Fr. Dimitry has said; this is why the free Russian Church Outside of Russia can have no communion with this jurisdiction. But in the same Moscow Patriarchate there is an increasing number of priests like Fr. Dimitry Dudko who do not participate in this betrayal, but speak in the spirit of the Catacomb Church and the free Russian Church Outside of Russia. We even know of at least one Catacomb priest (and probably there are others) who deliberately entered the Moscow Patriarchate in order to bring the grace of God to more people than is possible in the small cells of the Catacomb Church.

By no means all members of the Catacomb Church itself share the extreme views with which Fr. Dimitry has come into contact there. Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan and other leading hierarchs of the Catacomb Church have regarded it as a blasphemy to deny that the sacraments of the Moscow Patriarchate are grace-filled (see *The Orthodox Word*, 1977, no. 75, p. 182). An articulate spokesman of the Catacomb Church in the 1960's has stated specifically that he does not condemn the reception of Holy Communion in churches of the Moscow Patriarchate for those unable to endure the Catacomb life or find the Catacomb Church; he says: "If the present days were like the days of the Sergianist disturbance, I would tell you what I said then: Go to churches which do not have communion with Metropolitan Sergius, but do not go to him and his partisans. But the times have changed. We have no churches now in the USSR, and can we, who have gone into our solitary cells and find there everything which the churches gave us, forbid the thousands of believers *who do not have such an opportunity* from seeking consolation and spiritual food in the churches that exist, and can we condemn them because they go there?" (Lev Regelson, *The Tragedy of the Russian Church*, YMCA Press, 1977, p. 192). Many bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia have said the same thing. One of the staunchest defenders of the Catacomb Church in the Church Outside of Russia, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, notes something that has been mentioned by many others both inside and outside of Russia: "Zealots of the true faith in Russia have nurtured within themselves a feeling of a certain type, which alerts them to those of the clergy whom they can find to be true pastors, and to those they find to be otherwise"

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THE SHORTER THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS
OF ARCHBISHOP JOHN MAXIMOVITCH

Three Feasts of the Gospel

3. THE FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL

June 29

The day of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul is the culminating feasts of the Gospel. Although the last event in the life of Christ which is related in the Gospel is His Ascension into heaven (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51), the preaching of the Apostles is closely bound up with the Gospel. The Gospel tells us of their being chosen, and the Gospel indicates beforehand the end of Apostolic activity.

Telling of the appearance of Christ on the sea of Tiberias and the restoration to apostleship of Peter, who by his triple confession corrected his triple denial, the Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian speaks also of the prediction to the Apostle Peter concerning the end of his struggle. *When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whether thou wouldest not. This spoke He, signifying by what death he should glorify God* (John 21:18-19).

It was not pleasing to the Lord then to reveal the fate of each of the other Apostles, although, when sending them to preach, He predicted to them the persecutions that awaited them (Matt. 10:17-36). But now, to the question of Peter about John, Christ replied: *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me* (John 21:22).

The mysterious words of Christ about John, and the extraordinary circumstances of the latter's end, have been the cause for the opinion, which spread in the Church beginning from the days of the apostles, that John

would remain on earth until the Second Coming. Such a view of the end of the earthly life of the Apostle John is set forth in part also in the hymns on the day of his memorial, where mention is made of his special closeness to the earthly Church. Therefore, the day of the repose of the Apostle John the Theologian, which is also revered by the Church as a great feast, is not celebrated by the Church as is the day of repose of the Apostle Peter, which was definitely predicted by the Lord. It is precisely to the Apostle Peter and to no one else that the Lord predicted the culmination of his earthly ministry, because it was Peter who first, on behalf of all the Apostles, confessed Him to be Christ, the Son of God; he was the first to receive the promise of power to bind and loose, which was subsequently given to all the Apostles (Matt. 16:16-19 ; Matt. 18:18); and it was he who renounced Christ and was again restored to apostleship. Indicating to Peter the culmination of his Apostolic preaching when restoring to him the Apostolic calling, the Lord thereby reveals the essence of the Apostolic ministry.

The preaching of the Word of God not only by word of mouth, but likewise by deprivations, sufferings, and death, constituted the following of Christ and the continuation of His work.

The Apostle Peter, as the most zealous of all and one who strove to be before the others in word and deed, by his example aroused the other Apostles. Therefore it is primarily him that Christ addresses. He goes as it were in front of the other Apostles, becomes their "leader," and it is especially to him that the preaching among the Jews was entrusted, while the Apostle of the Gentiles was the one who received precisely this title, being converted later, the no less zealous Paul (Gal. 2:7-9).

These two Apostles were as it were the commanders of the rank of the Apostles, which is expressed (in the service to them) by the word "leaders."

Without having authority over others, they both stood in front of all others by their warm zeal and labors. Their life was the most brilliant and was a personification of the life and labors of all the Apostles. The end of their earthly labors was especially impressive also thanks to the fact that it occurred as it were before the eyes of the whole world. One of them (Peter) was crucified upside down, and the other (Paul) was beheaded, both in Rome itself, towards which at that time the gaze of all peoples was directed. The news of this quickly flew to all the ends of the universe, all the more in that they were both known personally in many places; their names were everywhere the Saviour had been preached.

THREE FEASTS OF THE GOSPEL

The Apostle of the Jews and the Apostle of the Gentiles departed to Christ on the same day, as if indicating their equal nearness to God and the oneness of the Church of Christ, in which *there is neither Greek nor Jew* (Col. 3:11). Therefore, the day on which the earthly labors ended for "the leaders of the Apostles, who labored more than all," who "separated in body, are together in spirit," became one of the memorable days for the whole Church.

The Apostle John the Theologian was still alive then, being in Ephesus, from where he was exiled to the island of Patmos. Not long before his translation into the other world, he wrote the Gospel, by which he completed the three Gospels written before him, and which he had approved. Having already completed his Gospel, he added to it the account of the manifestation of Christ on the sea of Tiberias in order that, quoting precisely the words of Christ about himself, he might refute the opinion that he had been promised by Christ to remain on earth until the Second Coming.

In this afterword to the Gospel written by him, the Apostle and Evangelist John set forth the prediction of Christ to the Apostle Peter concerning his martyr's death, and thus he bound the memory of this death with the Gospel.

Just as the last chapter of the Gospel of John is literally the conclusion of the whole Gospel, so also the feast dedicated to the fulfillment of the prophecy set forth there is as it were the conclusion of all the Gospel events kept in remembrance by the Church.

Being an immovable feast, it is nevertheless bound up with the movable feasts, since the preparation for it—the Apostles' Fast—begins one week after the feast of Pentecost; thus it depends on the date of the celebration of Pascha.

The feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul indicates the lot of the Holy Apostles here on earth and reveals the glory which followed it.

To go over the earth with the preaching of the Heavenly Kingdom, in this emulating Christ by their poverty, endurance of dishonor and sufferings, by their love for the children of the Heavenly Father, their inward torments of childbirth over those who heeded their preaching and their grief over those who paid no heed to their words, and finally by offering themselves as a sacrifice—this was the earthly lot of the Apostles.

But the culmination of their earthly life is at the same time the beginning of their heavenly glory. Their end is for them a dissolving of earthly ties and an ascent to Christ, Whom they loved, in order to remain eternally with Him (Phil. 1:23).

The day of their earthly end is the day of their heavenly birth, and the celebration of it is a solemnity of the coming of the future age for those who have followed Christ in this age, of the receiving of the crowns of righteousness prepared not only for them, but also for all who love His appearing (II Tim. 4:8). Coming after the feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit and being in part bound up with it, the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul culminates the yearly cycle of feasts dedicated to the earthly life of Christ and reveals the essence of His promises.

Just as the Nativity of John the Baptist is the foreword to the Gospel and the beginning of the events described in it, so also the death of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul is their culmination and the afterword of the Gospel.

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist is the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel of the New Testament on earth; his Beheading is the preaching of it in hell; and the day of the Holy Apostles is the realization of it in heaven.

"The firm and God-proclaiming preachers, the pinnacle of the Apostles, Thou hast received into the enjoyment of Thy good things and into repose; for Thou didst receive their pains and death as above all offerings, O Thou Who alone knowest what is in the heart" (Kontakion).

"The feast of the all-honorable Apostles hath come, interceding for the salavtion of all of us. Now mystically clapping our hands, let us say: Come into our midst invisibly, vouchsafing immaterial gifts for those who praise your feast in hymns." (Glory at Lauds).

IN DEFENSE OF FATHER DIMITRY DUDKO

(Continued from page 122)

(*Orthodox Life,* 1979, no. 6, p. 40); thus, people cut off from the Catacomb Church do receive communion from priests of the Moscow Patriarchate whom they can trust (Fr. Dimitry has described one such incident, quoted above), and we cannot condemn them for this. The Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, in view of all this, has decreed for all dioceses the commemoration at the Proskomedia of Fr. Dimitry and other imprisoned priests and laymen of the Moscow Patriarchate (Ukase no. 17 of Jan. 16/29, 1980; see *The Orthodox Word,* 1980, no. 90, p. 2); and as zealous a hierarch as Archbishop Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo commemorated publicly at the Great Entrance of the Liturgy the newly-reposed hierarch of the Moscow Patriarchate, Archbishop Germogen, who ended his life in disgrace with the church authorities because he would not accept the dictation of the atheists.

None of this changes in the least our basic attitude towards Sergianism as a betrayal of the Church, nor does it allow us who are free to enter into communion with the Moscow Patriarchate. But it does persuade us that, far from viewing Fr. Dimitry and others like him (such as Boris Talantov ten years ago) as jurisdictional "enemies" because they do not "join the Catacomb Church," we should try to understand better their extremely difficult situation and rejoice that such a genuine Orthodox Christian phenomenon is coming even from the midst of the compromised Moscow Patriarchate—a proof that church life is not dead even there and a promise that, once the political situation in Russia that produced "Sergianism" will have changed, a full unity in the faith will be possible with such courageous strugglers as Fr. Dimitry.

We do know that a Catacomb bishop showed his concern, from the other world, that Fr. Dimitry be ordained to the priesthood, even in the Moscow Patriarchate. This was Bishop Parthenius, a vicar of the Odessa diocese, who died in a concentration camp in the 1930's without recognizing Metr. Sergius. Once, in the difficult days of 1960 when Dimitry Dudko was despairing of ever being ordained (two years had passed since his graduation from the theological academy, and he was still regarded with suspicion by the church authorities as an ex-prisoner), the mother of his friend Gleb Yakunin had a dream: "Bishop Parthenius was standing fully vested at the table of preparation and told her: 'I am taking out a small piece of prosphora for your Mitya (Dimitry)—on November 7 (20) he will be a deacon—and a large piece—on November 8 (21) he will be a priest.'" It happened as Bishop Parthenius had foretold, and from that time Fr. Dimitry has always

commemorated this Catacomb bishop at the Liturgy as one of his own fathers in the faith. (A. Levitin-Krasnov, in *Russian Life,* Jan. 22, 1975.)

3. IS FR. DIMITRY A "KGB AGENT"?

Yet another criticism of Fr. Dimitry in the West is that he must be a KGB agent himself, or else he could not have been so free in speaking and writing and even sending his sermons abroad for publication.

This is the reward of Fr. Dimitry's immense labor in confessing the truth of Orthodox Christianity! None but an unloving, un-Christian heart could make such a cruel accusation after reading Fr. Dimitry's obviously suffering and heartfelt words; one can only assume that these critics have not read his writings. Fr. Dimitry himself, just before his arrest, wrote of his "sleepless nights" of agony and grief after reading such criticisms in the Russian emigre press; and undoubtedly such criticisms were used by the KGB in their attempt to "break" Fr. Dimitry and make him think that even the Orthodox Russians abroad were against him.

Few critics abroad, to be sure, have been quite so cruel, but a number of people have been unable to avoid a certain mistrust of him; the Soviets, they think, must have some "plan" in allowing Fr. Dimitry to speak so freely.

No one aware of Soviet reality can doubt that the schemes of the KGB extend literally everywhere, and that they seek to use the Church and its representatives for their own ends. But let us only reflect for a moment in an Orthodox way: Fr. Dimitry speaks in the spirit of age-old Orthodoxy and he speaks to the heart of the Russian (and not only the Russian!) people today; he is very popular among the Orthodox people, and so *of course* the Soviets would like to "use" him if they can. They have also sent their agents into the Catacomb Church and have tried to "use" conservative Orthodoxy by having such agents pose as anti-Communist traditionalists. Theoretically, therefore, we have a right to distrust *anyone* who speaks for Russian Orthodoxy. But it is one of the tricks of satan in our times to sow discord and misunderstanding in the midst of Orthodox Christians, and lack of trust for each other.

The obvious sincerity of Fr. Dimitry Dudko can only be judged by a loving, struggling, Christian heart. If such a truthful man as Fr. Dimitry can be mistrusted (as was Solzhenitsyn before him), then where can trust be placed in our cold-hearted world? One will begin to mistrust everyone around oneself, and end by closing oneself in a small group of "reliable" people—one of whom is probably a KGB agent!

The Orthodox answer to this unhealthy outlook can only be based on a believing Christian heart—which may sometimes be mistaken, but, with God's grace, will not be led entirely astray. The writings of Fr. Dimitry before his "confession" are of such a character that one cannot reasonably doubt their sincerity; they speak directly to the believing heart as do few other Orthodox writings of our times. Whatever may become of Fr. Dimitry now, these writings will remain—despite his forced "disowning" of them—part of the important Orthodox literature of our century.

Fr. Dimitry himself gives an answer to this air of suspicion that has become so widespread now in the Orthodox world: "Is it not time for us to learn to understand each other, to help each other, to rejoice for each other? . . . Brethren, Russia is perishing, the whole world is perishing, hiding itself behind a false prosperity, and we hinder each other from doing the work of God!" (*Possev,* June, 1980, p. 52.)

4. IS FR. DIMITRY AN "ECUMENIST" AND A "HERETIC"?

A final criticism of Fr. Dimitry, made by some would-be zealots of Orthodoxy in the West, is that he is an "ecumenist" and thus is literally a "heretic." This accusation is made on one of two grounds:

a. He belongs to the Moscow Patriarchate. which since 1970 has allowed Holy Communion to be given to Roman Catholics and Old Believers in Russia, and thus is a "heretical" organization, all of whose members are likewise "heretics."

b. In some of his writings and sermons, Fr. Dimitry praises "ecumenism," and he does not condemn heterodox Christians and does not state explicity that Orthodoxy alone is the Church of Christ.

The first of these accusations may be dealt with briefly: the decision of the Moscow Patriarchate to give Holy Communion to the non-Orthodox (under certain restricted conditions) is surely an anti-canonical act and one, perhaps, that is even heretical (if those promulgating it actually believe that Roman Catholics can be part of the Orthodox Church). As such it was condemned by the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia shortly after its promulgation (see *The Orthodox Word,* 1971, no. 6, p. 301). But this canonical disorder does not as such constitute a heresy that deprives all members of the given Church of the grace of God. The same bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia who condemned this act in 1971, in their Sobor of 1976 addressed the priests of the Moscow Patriarchate as genuine Orthodox pastors, giving them the greeting reserved only for Orthodox priests who have God's grace: "Christ is in our midst!" (See above

in this issue). The Moscow Patriarchate has worse faults than this (the chief of which is "Sergianism" itself—the subjection of the Church to dictation by atheists), but the free Russian Church has never condemned it as "heretical." Fr. Dimitry cannot be called a "heretic" on this basis, and those who attempt to do so find themselves at variance with the bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia.

As for the second accusation, even friends of Fr. Dimitry have to admit that in his earlier writings he sometimes used the word "ecumenism" as a word of praise. This was obviously done in ignorance of what the "ecumenical movement" actually is, and any sympathetic Orthodox Christian in the West can readily overlook this fault (as did Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky in his review of *Our Hope* in *Orthodox Russia* in 1976), as long as Fr. Dimitry is not teaching the actual heresy of the ecumenical "superchurch."

This brings us to a fundamental question of definition: what *is* ecumenism? Some would-be zealots of Orthodoxy use the term in entirely too imprecise a fashion, as though the very use of the term or contact with an "ecumenical" organization is in itself a "heresy." Such views are clearly exaggerations. "Ecumenism" is a *heresy* only if it actually involves the denial that Orthodoxy is the true Church of Christ. A few of the Orthodox leaders of the ecumenical movement have gone this far; but most Orthodox participants in the ecumenical movement have *not* said this much; and a few (such as the late Fr. Georges Florovsky) have only irritated the Protestants in the ecumenical movement by frequently stating at ecumenical gatherings that Orthodoxy *is* the Church of Christ. One must certainly criticize the participation of even these latter persons in the ecumenical movement, which at its best is misleading and vague about the nature of Christ's Church; but one cannot call such people "heretics," nor can one affirm that any but a few Orthodox representatives have actually taught ecumenism as a *heresy*. The battle for true Orthodoxy in our times is not aided by such exaggerations. All the less, then, can one call Fr. Dimitry a "heretic" for his naive praise of a movement in which he has never himself participated.

But what are Fr. Dimitry's actual views about the Church of Christ? Is it really a matter of indifference for him, as his critics say or imply, which Christian sect one might belong to?

These critics quote certain statements of Fr. Dimitry (in his book *Our Hope*) which they think deny the uniqueness of Orthodoxy: "We can't look down upon those of other faiths" (p. 19); "rejoice that you're Orthodox, but don't look upon others as if they'd all gone astray. God will judge us

all, and we should leave such judgment to Him" (p. 44); "the Catholics also form a church, and we don't call them heretics" (p. 46). In some of these statements there are faults—strictly speaking, for example, Roman Catholics are indeed "heretics," as St. Mark of Ephesus stated them to be. But these statements are addressed to simple people whose main concern is not theological precision, but practical advice: how should we behave towards the non-Orthodox? Fr. Dimitry's replies are pastorally correct, even if theologically sometimes imprecise. For this he cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be called a "heretic."

In actual fact, however, we in the West have something to learn from Fr. Dimitry's attitude towards the non-Orthodox. Among Western converts to Orthodoxy (to speak of something close to home) there is indeed a temptation to speak too freely of "heresy" and "heretics," and to make the errors of the non-Orthodox an excuse for a certain pharisaic smugness about our own "Orthodoxy." Even when it is worded in a theologically correct manner, this attitude is *spiritually wrong* and helps to drive away from the Orthodox Church many who would otherwise be attracted to it. Fr. Dimitry's attitude in this case, even if he sometimes expresses it in an imprecise way, is a sound one, both for the avoidance of phariseeism and a certain "sectarian" attitude on the part of his own Orthodox flock, and for the conversion of the non-Orthodox. Fr. Dimitry emphasizes that Orthodox Christians should go deeper into their own faith without judging the non-Orthodox; he rightly says: "Anyone who grows conceited about his faith is faithless" (*Our Hope*, p. 19), and again: "One can be Orthodox formally and yet perish faster than someone who belongs to another faith. Orthodoxy is joy at having found the truth, and the real Orthodox always looks at others with love. But if belonging to the Orthodox Church is accompanied by irritation at those who think otherwise, then one ought to doubt one's belonging to Orthodoxy" (p. 44). By such statements Fr. Dimitry does not at all "betray" the Orthodox faith, as some think; he only encourages his flock to be first of all humble and loving in their confession of Orthodoxy, and to avoid pride and irritable "correctness," for these are sectarian and not Orthodox qualities (which is why we should doubt our Orthodoxy if we have them) and will indeed cause us to be judged more severely than those of another faith.

That Fr. Dimitry does indeed confess Orthodoxy to be the true faith, and does not regard it a matter of indifference what sect one might belong to, can be seen in numerous statements he has made, many of them already translated into English. For example, in *Our Hope* he states: "All religions

do, indeed, contain some truth in them—some more, others less. Therefore, I welcome all religions and would like to find a common language with them all. This, however, does not in any way exclude the fact that I myself consider Christianity to be the *only* religion which satisfies all the needs of the human spirit—and moreover, Christianity in the Orthodox understanding . . . Now if Christianity fails to satisfy someone—that's a matter for his own conscience. Let God judge him—I won't. But my opinion about such people is this: God hasn't yet revealed Himself to them from the Christian point of view. Seek and you will find—just don't try to create your own religion" (pp. 234-5).

Fr. Dimitry's attitude to the non-Orthodox may be seen in his meetings with Baptists and other sectarians:

> Two young men somehow came to us. They were happy, polite, believing people. For a long time we could not make out what confession they belonged to. But as the conversation advanced it began to be felt that they were not Orthodox . . .
>
> "What confession do you belong to?" I asked.
>
> "And is that so important? We are Christians: with this, everything is said."
>
> "Of course, Christians, that is good . . ."
>
> They continued: "With the Catholics we are Catholics, with the Orthodox we are Orthodox, with the Baptists we are Baptists . . ."
>
> "You can combine all these things right away?
>
> "Of course . . ."
>
> "And if all families would be poured together into one collective farm, so that nobody knows who is father and who is mother?"
>
> "Well, so what?"
>
> "And how long have you been believers?"
>
> "A year."
>
> "My, my! After a year you have been able to hold so much! Live a little longer and you will be able to hold yet more . . .
>
> Another incident: A Baptist came to me. (I try to be respectful to everyone.) He even came to beg pardon: somewhere in a conversation he had said about me that I was "combining" everyone in myself, and people told him that he had betrayed Father Dimitry, and the Orthodox might punish him.
>
> "Of course," (I said,) I am respectful to everyone, but with this reservation: I am strictly Orthodox, I strive to preserve my own character. This does not mean that today I am one person and tomorrow somebody else. The attempt to create a universal Christianity is a fantasy . . ."
>
> "But I would like to be simply a Christian," the Baptist interrupted me.
>
> "You can't do that. For example, you come up against the Sacrament of Communion. The Baptists perform this simply as a remembrance, while we Orthodox perform it not only as a remembrance, but (believing) that this is the True Body and True Blood . . ."
>
> "Yes,"—he understood.
>
> "One must choose and stand on a definite point of view."
>
> . . . People ask: there are various churches; which is the right one?
>
> Khomiakov, the Orthodox philosopher and theologian, and most important, a true Christian in his life, has said: "The Church is known only by one who lives by the life of the Church." Like is known by like. Live rightly and a little longer, grow strong as is fitting, and here the Church will be also; but just considering yourself

churchly is not enough.

"One must live by the life of the Church!"

Further, noting in this same place that Christian seminars are being started in Russia, Fr. Dimitry clearly warns against the non-Orthodox, non-churchly attitude which is often present in these seminars: About the seminars, he writes, "one can only rejoice. However, one can also give a warning: strive not to break away from the Church, remember that Christianity is not a matter simply of glittering with knowledge; here spiritual experience is needed, and this is given by life in the Church." (*Nikodemos,* Fall, 1979, pp. 28-30).

Thus, it is clear enough that Fr. Dimitry strives to be "strictly Orthodox"; he is respectful towards those of other religions, but he is quite firm that one cannot be "simply a Christian" but must be definite in one's belief—and in his opinion Orthodoxy is the true belief. When he states that "for me Orthodoxy is correct," or "we shouldn't judge those of other faiths," we need not believe that he is denying the objective truth that Orthodoxy is indeed the true Church of Christ; he is simply expressing himself in a humble manner which, especially in Soviet conditions where the people are just awakening to faith as opposed to atheism, is very understandable, sharply distinguishes him from the sectarians who proclaim loudly that everyone else is in error, and helps to make converts to the Orthodox faith. Fr. Dimitry himself has baptised some 5000 adult converts—itself a testimony that he is not "indifferent" as to which faith one should belong to, and that his missionary approach is quite effective!

Some Orthodox people outside of Russia who are aware of the actual indifferent and even non-Christian character of the ecumenical movement, rather than condemn Fr. Dimitry for his naive statements about it as an "ecumenist" and a "heretic," have written to him warning him of its nature and perils. As a result, Fr. Dimitry's later statements reveal a different attitude towards it. Thus, in 1979 he wrote strong words against the "progressive" tendency among some of the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate: "They are for reforms! They can do anything—both lie and change things. Their emphasis is on young people, no matter what kind they might be. Anything is acceptable. Quantity! Throw dust in their eyes! They can collaborate with anyone you please—with the state security organs (KGB), with other confessions. 'Ecumenism' is their slogan. I am afraid that one can create a church in one's own image and likeness—a church of evil and cunning men" (*Possev,* July, 1979, p. 37). In this and other articles he

confesses himself to be a "conservative" in church matters—even to the extent of admiration for the Catacomb Church in Russia and the most traditional elements of the Russian Church Outside of Russia.

Such a man cannot be regarded as a "heretic" or an "ecumenist." This accusation comes from ignorance or a misreading of his actual views. Those people who are applying these false names to Fr. Dimitry today, if they do not see the error of their views, will undoubtedly be applying them in the near future to the bishops and priests of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, as well as to certain spokesmen of the Catacomb Church in Russia, with whom Fr. Dimitry is in agreement.

WHAT IS FR. DIMITRY'S MESSAGE FOR US?

We have tried to defend Fr. Dimitry from the unfair accusations made against him by people who have acted in ignorance or out of a lack of sympathy for the situation of suffering Russia today. No one will deny that Fr. Dimitry has faults and has made mistakes; but none of these justify the evil slanders that have been heaped upon him: "agent," "betrayer," "heretic." He has been a courageous priest preaching the Orthodox Gospel of Christ in an almost impossible situation; and he has deserved our full support and ardent prayers. These prayers are warmly offered by the clergy of the Russian Church Outside of Russia both at the Proskomedia, in accordance with the decree of the Synod of Bishops, and at other parts of the Divine services.

Now, of course, he has "recanted" his sermons and writings. Should our attitude towards him change?

The Russian Church has known a similar situation in this century. Patriarch Tikhon, after his imprisonment in 1922, began to make statements and issue decrees which indicated a certain compromise with the atheist authorities, in sharp contrast to his uncompromising statements and decrees made before that time. The free Russian Church accepts his earlier statements, which remain part of the inalienable heritage of the suffering Russian Church in the 20th century—so much so that even the absolutely uncompromising Catacomb Church continues to regard itself as "Tikhonite"; but the statements made after his imprisonment, obviously issued under compulsion, are disregarded without any doubt being thereby cast upon him as an Orthodox confessor and new martyr.

Towards Fr. Dimitry we cannot but have the same attitude. His earlier statements will continue to be regarded as an important part of the Orthodox confession and teaching of the suffering Russian Church under

Communism, but his "recantation" and any subsequent statements that contradict what he said earlier must be rejected.

Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, has noted how much *closer* Fr. Dimitry is now to those who look at suffering Orthodox Russia with sympathy and love: "By the 'repentance' of Fr. Dimitry, the atheists have deceived not us, but themselves, in that now the whole world understands what frightful means for the murder of the human will and personality the contemporary persecutors of Christ are using! . . . This mockery of Fr. Dimitry has made him even closer to us, our own brother in Christ, not only a confessor but also a martyr; it has allowed us to participate in his sufferings. It is not doubt and uncertainty that should take hold of us, but the firm conviction of our victory, by the power of Him Whom Fr. Dimitry serves so sincerely and with such self-sacrifice" (*Orthodox Russia,* 1980, no. 15, p. 1).

But the question of our attitude to Fr. Dimitry is not limited to his person; behind him stands the whole Orthodox revival of the much-suffering Russian people—a revival to which the atheist authorities hope they have given a fatal blow by "breaking" Fr. Dimitry. Fr. Dimitry has helped to lead the way in this revival; but others will follow. Our attitude towards Fr. Dimitry will indicate what attitude we have to this Orthodox revival in Russia.

From the time when Fr. Dimitry's sermons and writings became known in the West in the mid-1970's, he was accepted as a genuine manifestation of Holy Russia by the most responsible and conservative elements in the Russian Church Outside of Russia. This was in spite of the almost universal initial reluctance to listen to him because, "after all, he is in the Moscow Patriarchate." The free Russian Church, one may say, took him to heart and, without changing in the least its uncompromising stand towards the "Sergianism" of the Moscow Patriarchate, recognized in Fr. Dimitry an authentic representative of the deep religious and Orthodox awakening of the Russian people.

This was not in the least a "liberal fashion," as some enemies of Fr. Dimitry would like to make it out. It was precisely the older, more conservative generation of Russian theologians who led the way in the discovery of Fr. Dimitry among us. Thus, Fr. Michael Pomazansky, the pre-eminent theologian of the Russian Church Abroad and surely (in his late 80's then) a leading "conservative" of this Church, gave great praise to the book *Our Hope,* even while noting that one should not be put off by Fr. Dimitry's superficial praise of "ecumenism," which he excused owing to Fr.

Dimitry's ignorance of this movement (*Orthodox Russia,* 1976). Fr. Sergei Shukin (now reposed), at 80 years of age one of the last of the real zealots of Orthodoxy in Russia in the 1920's, wrote a review of *Our Hope* and other writings of Fr. Dimitry, highly recommending them to Orthodox readers and affirming that "in them we feel that in the Soviet Union there is truly occurring a spiritual awakening" (*Russian Word in Canada,* Sept., 1976, p. 16).

Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal, in the foreword to the second of Fr. Dimitry's books which he has published, calls Fr. Dimitry "a fearless confessor of the true Orthodox Church . . . Only the grace of the Holy Spirit strengthens his always limited human powers, inspires him in the exploit of confession and martyrdom, and places in his words a divine fire which burns the hearts of men" (*Sunday Talks,* St. Job Brotherhood, Montreal, 1977, p. 5).

Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, who is always most strict in his judgments regarding church life in the Soviet Union, has quoted pages of Fr. Dimitry's writings in the church press, noting that "although we do not agree with everything in the book of this exceptionally gifted priest, we cannot deny his faith, sincerity. and lively talent," and he cites Fr. Dimitry's words as proof that "in Russia a great and for us a tremblingly-joyful religious rebirth is occurring" (*Orthodox Russia,* 1976, no. 18, pp. 5-6).

One could also cite the enthusiastic solidarity shown for Fr. Dimitry by Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco, the official periodicals of the dioceses of Western Europe and Australia, the leading church organ of the Russian Church Abroad—*Orthodox Russia*—and numerious bishops and priests, all of which testify that the best part of the Russian Church Outside of Russia has found in Fr. Dimitry a priest who is one in spirit with them in their battle for true Orthodoxy. Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) of Manhattan has written: "Those in Russia who are holding fast to Orthodoxy and preaching the truth, not submitting to the influence of outside powers, are not merely our allies, but our brethren in one and the same Church" (*Orthodox Life,* 1979, no. 6, p. 40). That is why the Sobor of Bishops in 1976, in the official epistle representing the views of Metropolitan Philaret and all the bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, declared to the courageous priests of the Moscow Patriarchate who are following Fr. Dimitry's path: "We kiss the Cross which you have taken upon yourselves, O pastors who have found the courage and power of spirit to be open accusers of the faintheartedness of your hierarchs who have capitulated to the atheists . . . We know of your exploit, we read about you, we read what you have written, we pray for you and

ask your prayers for our flock in the Diaspora. Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!"

This is not the enthusiasm of a moment; it is not a blind following of some new intellectual fashion. It is rather the deep response of the best part of the free Russian Church to the re-awakening voice of true Orthodoxy in Russia—a response which is all the more heartfelt in that it sees that Fr. Dimitry and others like him have something important to say to us in the free world also.

This response of the Russian Church Outside of Russia is quite remarkable in the contemporary Orthodox world, which is characterized by canonical and doctrinal looseness at one extreme, and a self-righteous "correctness" on the other. We in the free Russian Church are in one and the same Church with Fr. Dimitry, even though we have no communion with his hierarchs and even with him (until he becomes free of them). Fr. Dimitry himself has expressed this paradox well: "The unity of the Church at the present time consists in division . . . Right now we cannot be one; we must be separate in order to preserve unity. The kind of unity where they want to drive us all into a single herd—this is precisely the worst kind of division . . . We must all learn to understand each other, to be tolerant towards each other. This will also be a pledge of our unity. Let everyone be guided by his own conscience; each one stands or falls before God, and God will judge everyone . . . But this does not mean that one should not stand up for the rightness of his own jurisdiction and even consider others to be in error. One must look more widely through the narrow gates of love; the commandment of love is wide. Live as your conscience says, choose according to your conscience, battle according to your conscience—and you will preserve unity!" (*Vestnik* of the Russian Student Christian Movement, 1979, no. 129, p. 272).

Those who try to see everything in terms of the canons regarding officially "schismatic" organizations will not wish to understand this message, which has been taken so much to heart by the free Russian Church. Yet this is precisely the teaching of one of the founding fathers of the Catacomb Church of Russia, Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, who fought against the "legalistic" understanding of the Church's laws which Metr. Sergius was advocating. He wrote to Metr. Sergius in 1929: "It amazes you that, while refraining from celebrating Liturgy with you, I nonetheless do not consider either myself or you to be outside the Church. 'For church thinking such a theory is completely unacceptable,' you declare; 'it is an attempt to keep ice on a hot grill.' If in this case there is any attempt on my part,

it is not to keep ice on a hot grill, but rather to melt away the ice of a dialectical-bookish application of the canons and to preserve the sacredness of their spirit" (*The Orthodox Word,* 1977, no. 75, p. 183).

The leading canonical expert in the Russian Church Outside of Russia, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), has written that the canons of the Church "give the reaction of the Church to persecution of the Faith under the conditions of the first centuries of Christianity. Now, apparently, there also exist other causes unforeseen 1700 years ago and which we, outside the Soviet Union, cannot assess. For this reason alone we have been compelled to abstain from very decisive judgments concerning personalities and certain phenomena of the religious life of the Soiet Union, both from condemning them and approving them, with the exception of individual cases that are sufficiently clear" (*Orthodox Life,* 1979. no. 6, p. 43). This caution in applying the canons to church life in Russia has enabled us to be both strict in condemning "Sergianism" (even though it is accepted as "canonically correct" by most of the Orthodox world) and supportive of priests like Fr. Dimitry who are with us in our anti-Sergianism even while belonging (for outward reasons) to the Moscow Patriarchate.

What is happening in Russia, so difficult to puzzle out for the logical mind, is much more easily understood by the believing Orthodox heart. And it *must* be understood by us in the free world. Fr. Dimitry speaks to us: "We must understand that what is being done in Russia today is being done for the whole world. And if they will understand our experience, they will not suffer everything that we have suffered. But if they will not understand, then, as Solzhenitsyn has said, only Gulag can bring them to their senses. May God grant it may not be thus!" (*Vestnik* of the Western European Diocese of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, 1980, no. 16, p. 14.)

The Gulag, the Golgotha of Russia, may indeed come to us for our sins; but will it produce the Orthodox revival which Russia is now undergoing? Let us admit that, seeing the awakening of Orthodox Russia in the midst of unparalleled sufferings and difficulties, our own feeble, comfortable, calculating, "correct" Orthodoxy is exposed for the pitiful thing it is; and let us take our example from the suffering, heartfelt Orthodoxy of Fr. Dimitry and his fellow strugglers. They are calling us to a deeper and more genuine Orthodoxy. If we do not hear their call, we could indeed have an Orthodoxy that is only a "museum-piece"—as proper and correct as you want, but without the fire of true zeal and love which our Lord came upon this earth to ignite.

(*Continued from page 112*)

heresies or frightful blasphemies against my Lord Jesus Christ and His Most Pure Mother, and against the holy icons. I am afraid that fire will come down from heaven and burn me alive."

The Saint replied to him: "Take my advice, brother. When the sea is disturbed, what waves it raises up and causes them to break against the rocks! But the waves again return to the sea. So also the evil thoughts which are sent by the devil act upon the human soul, and if a man listens to their advice, and follows it, he perishes, as many who have submitted to them have perished. But if someone in battling against foul thoughts does not give way, but all the more becomes courageous and opposes them, despising the demon, the ill will of the demon is turned against himself, and that man receives a reward from God. You also, my child: endure, oppose the demon by prayer and fasting, and he will soon flee from you. Flee from slander and anger; they more than anything else evoke blasphemy. Thus having instructed the brother, he let him go in peace.

The Saint was not deprived also of the gift of healing infirmities. There came to him a certain woman with a toothache and begged the saint to heal her. He said to her: "We are sinful and unclean people, and we cannot heal you unless God Himself has mercy on you." And with these words Niphon went to church, prayed, and having taken oil from the lamp before the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, anointed the face of the sick woman over the whole swelling—and immediately the pain ceased. Being healed, the woman went away, glorifying God. Another woman also, who had earlier brought him food, when she became sick and was near death, he healed by prayer, and she became well.

7. *He Beholds the Fate of Souls after Death.*

With his clairvoyant eyes the Saint saw also the souls of men after their departure from the body. Once, standing at prayer in the church of St. Anastasia, he raised his eyes to heaven and saw the heavens opened and many angels, of whom some were descending to earth, and others were ascending, bearing to heaven human souls. And he saw two angels ascending, carrying someone's soul. And when they came near the toll-house of fornication, the demonic tax collectors came out and said with anger: "This is our soul; how do you dare to carry him past us?" The angels replied: "What kind of sign do you have on this soul, that you consider it yours?" The

demons said: "It defiled itself before death with sins, not only natural ones but even unnatural ones; besides that, it judged its neighbor and died without repentance. What do you say to that?"

"We will not believe," said the angels, "either you or your father the devil, until we ask the guardian angel of this soul." And when they asked him, he said: "It is true that this soul sinned much, but when it got sick it began to weep and confess its sin before God; and if God has forgiven it, He knows why: He has the authority. Glory be to His righteous judgment!" Then the angels, having put the demons to shame, entered the heavenly gates with that soul.

Then the blessed one saw the angels carrying yet another soul, and the demons ran out to them and cried out: "Why are you carrying souls without knowing them? For example, you are carrying this one, who is a lover of money, a bearer of malice, and an outlaw." The angels replied: "We well know that it did all these things, but it wept and lamented, confessed its sins, and gave alms; for this God has forgiven it." But the demons began to say: "If even this soul is worthy of God's mercy, then take and carry away the sinners from the whole world. Why should we be laboring?" To this the angels replied: "All sinners who confess their sins with humility and tears receive forgiveness by God's mercy; but he who dies without repentance is judged by God."

Thus, having put the evil spirits to shame, the angels went past. The Saint further saw how they were carrying the soul of a certain God-loving man who was chaste and merciful and loved everyone: the demons, seeing him from afar, ground their teeth, but the angels of God went out to greet it from the heavenly gates and welcomed this soul, saying: "Glory to Thee, O Christ God, that Thou hast not left it in the hands of the enemy, but has delivered it from the pits of hell."

A certain time later, blessed Niphon saw how demons were dragging a soul to hell; this was the soul of a certain slave whom his master had worn out with hunger and beaten. He had not endured such torment and, by the instigation of the demon, had taken a rope and hanged himself. His guardian angel was going at a distance and weeping bitterly, while the demons were rejoicing. The weeping angel was commanded by God to go to the city of Rome and to guard there a new-born infant who was being baptized there at that time.

The Saint also saw another soul who was being carried in the air by angels, and they were met by a legion of demons; they had not reached the fourth toll-house when the demons took that soul away from the hands

of the angels and with mockery threw it into the abyss. This was the soul of a certain cleric of the church of St. Eleutherius; he had constantly angered God by fornication, sorcery, and thievery, and he had died suddenly without repentance, and was the joy of the demons.

The Saint built a church in Constantinople dedicated to the Most Holy Mother of God, and he lived at this church and converted many unbelievers to the faith of Christ. The devil did not endure the fact that Niphon was turning away many from the temptations of the demons, and he came to him with a multitude of demons, about a thousand; they fell upon the Saint at night and wished to torture him; his whole dwelling was filled with demons. But he forbade them with the sign of the cross, and with the help of God and the aid of a holy angel, he took each of them, one at a time, and gave them a thousand blows, until they swore to him that they would not even go near to the place where the name of Niphon was pronounced.

Conversing once with the brethren for the benefit of their souls, Niphon remembered the following: "There was in this city the slave of a renowned man; his name was Basil, he was a tailor by trade, and was of evil life: he used foul language, was disobedient and was a clown; he spent all his time in games and unclean fleshly sins with harlots, and he did not listen to the instructions of his master. But by the wondrous providence of the merciful Master, he received salvation in this way:

"By God's allowance, for the sins of the people, there occurred a great famine, and the masters began to chase away their slaves because there was not enough food; and Basil's master also chased him away. Basil went away and the first day sold his clothing so as to acquire food for himself; then he began to go naked and beg for alms. It was winter then, and he was shivering and freezing from the cold. Finally, in exhaustion he lay down in a certain street. After some time his toes froze off, and then his feet also. Basil endured everything, considering this as a chastisement for his sins, and he said nothing but 'Glory be to God for everything!' Thus he lay for two months in the street without covering, weeping over his sins. By chance a certain lover of Christ, Nicephorus by name, was walking on that street. Seeing the sufferer Basil, he commanded his slave to take him to his house, where with love he gave him repose; with his own hands he made his bed and fed him. In two weeks, on a Saturday, the sick Basil began to say: 'Your coming is joyful for me, O holy angels; rest a little and we shall go.' And they said: 'No, come quickly, for the Lord is calling you.' 'Wait a little,' replied Basil, 'until I give over my debt; I took a loan of ten copper pieces from a certain friend of mine, and up to now I

have not given it back. If I do not, the devil may detain me in the air for this.'

"And the angels waited until Basil, having gathered ten copper pieces, sent them to the one to whom they were owed; and then he gave over his spirit to God. So you see, children," Niphon finished his account, "what are the decrees of God and how, according to His desire, He saves a sinner."

8. *His Divine Visions.*

Once the blessed one came with his disciple to pray in the church adjoining the palace of Aponius, where the bishop performed the Divine services. And the spiritual eyes of the Saint were opened, and he saw fire descending from heaven and covering the altar and the bishop. During the singing of the Thrice-holy Hymn, four angels appeared and sang together with the singers. And when they read the Epistle, he saw the holy Apostle Paul watching the reader from behind. When they began to read the Gospel, the words like lanterns rose up into the heavens. During the transferral of the Gifts the church curtain was opened and the heavens were revealed, and a marvellous fragrance could be sensed. Then angels began to descend, singing: "Glory to Christ God!" They brought a splendid Child, placed him on the Paten,* and themselves surrounded the altar-table and served the Holy Gifts. Two Seraphim and two Cherubim, hovering over His head, covered Him with their wings.

When the time came for the consecration of the Gifts and the performance of the fearful Mystery came, one of the most bright angels came up and, having taken a knife, pierced the Child. He put the Blood into the holy Chalice, and having placed the Child on the Paten, again stood with reverence in his own place. Then there began the communion of the Divine Gifts, and the blessed one saw that among some who were receiving communion their faces were as bright as the sun, while the faces of others were dark and black like Ethiopians. The angels who stood there beheld how each one came up, and they crowned those who received worthily, but turned away from those who were unworthy and disdained them.

At the end of the holy service, he saw that the Child suddenly again was whole in the hands of the angels and ascended to heaven. Later the Saint himself related this to his disciple, who wrote it down for the benefit of many.

Once the Saint was going to the church of the Most Holy Mother

* Upon which the holy bread, the "Lamb," is placed for consecration at the Liturgy.

of God which he himself had built, and he saw that on the way an Ethiopian was walking, being very sorrowful. This was a prince of the demons, and other demons were following him. When they went up nearer and heard the church singing, the lesser demons began to scold their prince, saying: "See how the name of Jesus is glorified by those whom we had once in our power. Where, then, is our power? They have conquered it, and our kingdom is destroyed."

Thus the demons heaped reproach on their prince; but he said to them: "Do not be grieved, do not despair; I will soon arrange it so that the Christians will leave Jesus and will glorify us."

They went a little away and met thirty men; the prince of the demons went up to one of them and whispered to him in his ear—and the man was darkened in mind and began to utter unclean words, laugh. and sing shameless songs. Then they went to a musician who was walking and playing. The blessed one saw how one Ethiopian bound them all with a single rope and dragged them after the musician; and they all went dancing after him. Many people joined them and went further, dancing and singing shameful songs—for the demons dragged them, hooking them by the heart. One wealthy man, however, looking out of his house, gave the musician a copper coin so that they might dance before him. When the musician placed the coin in his pocket, the demons took it and sent it to hell to their father satan, and said to him: "Rejoice, our father! Alazion our prince has sent this to you as a sacrifice which our enemies, the Christians, have offered, giving copper coins for playing."

Taking it, satan rejoiced and said: "Strive, O children, so that our sacrifices might increase and conquer the Christians." And then again he returned the coin to the pocket of the musician. Blessed Niphon, however, seeing this with his spiritual eyes, said with bitterness: "Oh, woe to those who offer through playing a sacrifice to demons!" And he instructed his listeners to avoid unclean and disorderly playing, since it is from the devil.

Once, after prayer, the Saint was in a state of spiritual ecstasy and saw a broad field, equal in width and length, and on it stood a multitude of Ethiopians, divided into regiments; there were 365 regiments in all, according to the number of the most serious sins. One of the darkest Ethiopians counted the warriors, arranging the regiments as if for battle, and said: "Look at me and do not fear anything; my power will be with you!"

Several demons brought a multitude of various weapons and distributed them by regiments. Then the devil gave to each regiment the power of sorcery and magic, and let them go through all the earth against the

Church of Christ. As blessed Niphon looked upon this, suddenly he heard a voice: "Turn, O Niphon, to the east and behold."

He turned and saw a clean and splendid field, and upon it a numberless multitude—hundreds of thousands—of soldiers, more than the Ethiopians, in white garments, all armed as for battle. Then a man appeared, brighter than the sun, and said: "Thus the Lord of Sabaoth commands: Go through the whole earth, help the Christians, and guard their life." Seeing this, the Saint glorified God Who helps His Church.

9. He is Made Bishop.

Saint Niphon was approaching old age. The time came for him to receive the rank of bishop, which had been predicted to him by God in the following vision. He saw a certain field filled with a great multitude of sheep, but there was no shepherd for them. The blessed one thought: "What is this: do these sheep without a shepherd not fear the wolf?" Immediately there appeared a bright man, similar in appearance to the holy Apostle Paul, and said: "Why are you standing idle and looking at the royal sheep? Why do you not shepherd them?" Blessed Niphon replied: "Am I to shepherd the royal sheep? I am not acquainted with this work, and I am very weak." But the one who had appeared said: 'The King has commanded you to shepherd them for a short time, and then, having reposed, you will receive a great reward."

And with these words he gave him a staff and entrusted him with the sheep and the enclosure, and then departed. Awakening, the blessed one thought: "What does this mean?" And he understood that the man that had appeared to him was the holy Apostle Paul; the sheep were men; and the enclosure was the church. He became very frightened lest they make him a bishop in the reigning city (Constantinople). Niphon said to himself: "Did I not entreat God that I might not have any authority over anyone? And here He wishes to give me authority! I will act like the Prophet Jonah and flee from here!" Taking his disciple, he left his cell and got on a boat.

With a gentle wind the boat quickly reached Alexandria, where at that time the Patriarch was Alexander*, who governed the church after Peter, who had suffered for Christ under Diocletian. On the same day the residents of the city of Constantia came from the island of Cyprus and entreated Patriarch Alexander to make them a bishop, whomever he should find worthy, since their shepherd, Christopher, a man holy and revered,

* Patriarch from 312 to 326, commemorated on May 29.

had reposed. The Patriarch said to them: "Wait a little until God shall show me such a man."

The same night the Patriarch saw the holy Apostle Paul, who asked him: "Whom are you going to ordain bishop for the city of Constantia?" The Patriarch replied: "I do not know; whomever God should will." St. Paul said: "God will show you a worthy one. Only be tomorrow with all the clergy in church, and look at those who enter. Whomever you will see who in everything is like me—entrust the flock to him."

In the morning the Patriarch sat in church and looked to see who of those who entered would be like the one who had appeared to him. Niphon, not knowing anything about this, went into the church and said on the way to his disciple: "I feel in my heart something which is both sorrow and joy. Will not something be happening to us?" And with these words he entered the church. Seeing him, the Patriarch said to his Archdeacon: "Look, Athanasius, is not this man similar in face to the image of the holy Apostle Paul?" "Yes, father," replied the Archdeacon; "truly he is, and he is worthy to shepherd the church of Christ; I see an Angel of God going with him and conversing with him; and besides this, a crown of precious stones can be seen on his head."

Then the Patriarch called the Saint up to him, greeted him, and they sat down. The Archdeacon said with a smile to Niphon: "Why did you flee, O father? You have come to it now against your will."

When the blessed one knew what was going to happen to him, he said with a sigh: "Woe is me! I am a sinner and unworthy to accept such authority!" The Patriarch replied: "Oh! If only I were so unworthy!" And with these words he stood up and began the Divine Liturgy, and he consecrated Saint Niphon to the rank of cleric. Then, in the course of several days, he ordained him deacon and presbyter; and afterwards he raised him up to the rank of bishop, and all rejoiced over such a shepherd revealed by God.

After being ordained bishop, Niphon remained in Alexandria for three days, conversing with the holy men who were there. After this the Patriarch let Niphon go to his see, having sent with him, to show him honor, his own Archdeacon and other holy men. They came to the city of Constantia in Cyprus on the fourth of September. Those who had been sent with him, having entrusted the flock to him, returned to Alexandria, glorifying God.

Niphon, the hierarch of God, began diligently to shepherd the flock of Christ and to be concerned with the salvation of the faithful. He

was a father to the orphans and widows, an unmercenary physician for the sick, and a benefactor for the infirm. At the same time he performed various miracles, to describe all of which would be impossible. For this he was very beloved and revered by all.

Being vigilantly concerned for his flock, he saw once a great Ethiopian who was leaning on a staff as if in sorrow; he was walking into the city and frequently rested on the way. The Saint understood that this was the devil, and he cried out to him: "I say to you, O vile one: Why and how have you dared to come here?" The Ethiopian looked at him with anger, as if he wished to devour him, and said: "I heard that you were here, and I came to crush you with your sheep." The Saint replied: "Weakling! You yourself are crushed, and you wish to crush me? I have seen how a single struggler was fighting with you, and thirty of your demons grew faint in the battle with him. Who would not laugh at your weakness?"

"Do not be surprised at this," the devil said. "If I had my previous strength, it would cause me no effort at all to crush you; but from the time that Jesus was crucified, I have really been weak."

The Saint replied: "And now, if I pray to my Christ, what will become of you, O shameless one?" "I know," replied the devil, "that you can do much; but do me no evil, and I will go away from your city and will not come any more to it."

Seeing this, the hierarch gave thanks to God that He was preserving him and keeping his flock from the evil demon.

10. The Saint's Blessed Repose.

After governing the Church of Christ a short time, Saint Niphon drew close to the time of his repose, which he knew three days beforehand. There came to him then the great Athanasius. who had previously been Archdeacon and then, after the death of Alexander, occupied the see of the Church of Alexandria.* He was informed by God in good time of the coming death of Niphon, and therefore he came there with all his clergy to the final farewell with the Saint of God. Niphon, seeing Athanasius, asked him: "Why have you labored, O blessed father, to come to me, a sinful man?"

"I know," replied Athanasius, "that tomorrow you will go to the Jerusalem on high, and I came to converse with you. I beg you: when you will stand before the throne of God, remember me there, so that I may receive mercy from the Lord."

* Saint Athanasius the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria from 326, died 373, commemorated January 18 and May 2.

"And you, father," said the Saint, "when you perform the Divine services, remember also my poverty."

In the same night Niphon prayed long for himself and for his flock. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord with consolation and the news that there was prepared for him eternal repose.

At the time of the morning prayer he began to suffer severe signs of bodily illness, and therefore he said to his disciple: "Child, spread a mat for me on the ground." And when the disciple fulfilled his instruction, he lay down on it totally sick.

At the coming of day, Athanasius the Great came to him and, sitting near him, he asked: "Father, does a man gain any benefit from illness, or not?" The Saint replied: "Just as gold, when burned in fire, puts off rust, so also a man, when he grows sick, is cleansed from his sins." Then, being silent a little, he wept; and then he smiled, and his face became bright, and he said: "I greet you, O holy angels!" After a little while, he said: "Rejoice, holy martyrs!" And his face became yet brighter. And after a certain time he said: "Grace to you, blessed prophets!"

Then the spiritual eyes of Saint Athanasius himself were opened, and he saw that the blessed one was being greeted by all the choirs of saints, each one separately. Then Niphon said joyfully: "I greet you, priests, monks, and all saints!" And he was silent again. Soon he cried out: "Rejoice, thou who didst hear the greeting 'Rejoice,' splendid light, my helper and strength; I glorify thee, O Good One, for I remember thy mercy and grace!"

After this he was silent, and his face became as bright as the sun, so that all present were terrified. There was sensed also a fragrant aroma, and soon a voice from heaven was heard, calling him to eternal repose. Thus he gave his precious and holy soul into the hands of God, on the 23rd day of December. There was weeping and bitter lamentation in the whole city, and they buried Saint Niphon with honor in the great church of the Holy Apostles, glorifying Him Who is merciful to sinners and Who is wondrous in His saints, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages, amen.

The Teachings of St. Niphon

The repentance, struggles, and visions of St. Niphon produced a teaching characterized by its emphasis on the inward side of the virtuous Christian life. The following pages, taken from an early life of St. Niphon, are as applicable to our own day as they were to his. (Translated from Russian translation in Sts. Barsanuphius and John, Guidance in Spiritual Life, Moscow, 1855).

1. A certain brother asked blessed Niphon: Tell me, my father, a word for my benefit: how can I be saved?

In answer to this, the elder said to him: My son! If you wish to live among men, you must do the following: never blame anyone at all, do not judge, offend no one, do not become angry, do not belittle anyone, and likewise do not think that you have done anything good at any time; and beware of saying: Such a one lives well, but such a one is unrestrained, for this is what *judge not* means (Matt. 7:1). But look upon all with the same eyes, with the same disposition of heart, with the same mind, in simplicity of heart, and receive everyone as Christ Himself. Do not incline your ear to a man who slanders (his neighbor), and do not delight in (the conversation of such a one, but keep your lips in much silence, being slow to conversation and quick to prayer. And never reproach a slander or anyone else who does iniquity, but always look at your own faults; reproach and belittle yourself every day.

2. The brother said: This, my father, is possible only to perfect ascetics.

The blessed one replied: My son! If youth has humility, this is sufficient for it, since God asks nothing more from a young person than purity and humility. You, my son, be meek and humble, compassionate and merciful; consider yourself worse than all men, and you will live truly

with God. Struggle also not to fancy about yourself: I have attained the measure of such-and-such a saint; but always say to yourself: Do you know, my soul, that by our sins we have surpassed even the demons, but that we have never done a good deed for the sake of God; and woe to us, degraded ones: what shall we do in the day of judgment?

But for the whole course of your life, my son, pray like a sinner, saying at all times: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me! And: O God, cleanse me, a sinner! Repeat always these words also: *From my secret sins cleanse me, and from those of others spare Thy servant* (Ps. 18:13). Know also that you should not be satisfied with your good deeds, and do not place your hope in them, because we do not know whether they are pleasing to God or not. And therefore place your hope more in God and His power, considering yourself as useless dust. From this, correction will follow.

3. The brother said again: My father! How can a man conquer every temptation that comes to him from the enemy?

The elder replied: If any kind of temptation comes upon you, the victory over it consists of silence, humility, and in saying: Bless, father! All the works of one who is humble-minded are pleasing to God and praiseworthy before His holy angels, but are threatening and terrible to demons. And so, my son, be humble and utterly contrite of heart, so that the Holy Spirit might desire to dwell in you, and He will grant you power to cast off from you all earthly care.

4. (The brother) asked again: As now the saints have multiplied in the whole world, will it be so at the end of this age?

The blessed one said to him: My son, to the very end of this age there shall not be lacking prophets of the Lord God, as also servants of satan. But in the last times those who truly will serve God will succeed in hiding themselves from men and will not perform in their midst signs and wonders as at the present time, but they will travel by a path of activity intermixed with humility, and in the Kingdom of Heaven they will be greater than the Fathers who have been glorified by signs. For at that time no one will perform before the eyes of men miracles which would inflame men and inspire them to strive with zeal for ascetic labors . . . Many, being possessed by ignorance, will fall into the abyss, going astray in the breadth of the broad and spacious path.

5. The brother asked again: Tell me, my father, why do some wear out their bodies with continence, and yet the passions dominate in them: anger, hostility, remembrance of wrongs, envy, and the most evil of all, lack of mercy, and stinginess; while some of the virtuous eat and

drink wine, and in them no sin at all can be seen. What does this mean?

The Saint said to this: Many who fast and do not correct themselves as I think, my son, endure this for their tongue, for one who does not always guard his tongue, even if he fasts the whole year, receives no benefit at all. And so, if the devil irritates you to anger, say nothing, and you will have won a victory over passion.

Again, if the enemy arouses you to envy, do not slander, and you will have conquered the evil one, for the fruit of envy is slander.

If the deceiver kindles sensual passion in you, do not open your lips for conversation with a woman, and likewise allow yourself no excess in food and drink, and you will have been strengthened against him. Further, take a switch and apply it to yourself, and the pain will banish the battle, for according to what is said (in the Scripture), it is more profitable for you if even one of your members perish than that your whole body be cast into the fiery gehenna (Matt. 5:29).

If this fierce wild boar should arouse in you the desire for expensive foods, go to the outhouse and you will know their foul odor.

If someone should reproach you, or judge you, or call you foolish, humble your thoughts and condemn yourself as a sinner; remember that Christ the Son of God was spat upon, mocked by sinners, beaten about the head with a reed, and therefore consider yourself unworthy even to live.

As for those virtuous ones who eat and drink (apparently freely), know that they are valiant warriors who have trampled on the sinful passions and now have become lords and masters, having received from God the gift of dispassion. They first gave themselves over to continence and struggled, and attained at last the goal which they desired. Moreover, those who act thus often do this only before men; when they are by themselves they are in silence, in continence, making up by fasting in their cells what they deprived themselves of by a (small) allowance before men.

Letters

continued.

response to my appeal.

Mr. Magimbi Theudorous Matovu
P.O. Box 163
Bombo, Uganda

Ed. note: Let the response of Orthodox Christians to these appeals be generous! Help the suffering Orthodox people of Uganda, who have been enduring severe trials of tyranny, civil war, and now drought, famine, and absolute poverty. Packages of clothes and other articles should be sent insured, or else they may not reach the addressees. Packages and checks or international money orders may also be sent to the bishop of the Orthodox Church in Uganda, together with a word of support and encouragement:

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